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Shining Tears™

OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE



BY MICHAEL LUMMIS
AND KATHLEEN PLEET

This game
has received
the following
rating from
the ESRB:



COVERS PLAYSTATION® 2 COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

SEGA®



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The Light Returns

The story begins with a strange incident in the Fortress City of Shildia. An Elven woman named Elwyn comes upon a strange young man who has washed up by the shore. Tired and wounded, he barely clings to life, yet he clutches fervently at a set of rings. Knowing that there is a highly intelligent and skilled doctor in town, Elwyn helps the stranger to a nearby inn and calls for Doctor Pios. At this point in time, dark forces are aligning against the city of Shildia, and the young man joins ranks with a group of heroes that are sworn to protect the land. You control these heroes, and the power of the mysterious rings is at your disposal. Though the battles ahead are likely to be fierce, there is nothing that cannot be overcome through perseverance and will.

Shining Tears is a strategy/action game where you control two characters and guide them through large-scale battles against many foes. There are nine possible characters to take into combat, and each of these has unique powers and styles of play. This strategy guide covers the heroes and enemies of the game in considerable depth, listing stats and strategies for building your party and defeating both Normal and Advanced game modes. Extended areas of the game, such as the Tower of Heaven, are also covered, so that players can find all of the hidden items and reach the greatest levels of power. Whether you thirst for item tables, crafting information, or tactics for the next mission, this is the place for you to find what you seek.





The Forces of Goodness

Shining Tears is all about the pairing of two characters and how their abilities combine to defeat waves of deadly opponents. You are only able to use two people simultaneously, so the way you develop each character is tremendously important (and is influenced by the characters you pair them with). This chapter looks through the nine playable characters in the game and discusses their skills, interactions, background, and equipment.

XION (MAGE KNIGHT)



Xion is often the primary character in *Shining Tears*. At later points in the game, you are free to choose any two characters while reviewing past battles, but all of the game's primary engagements have Xion at the lead. Luckily, Xion is an exciting character to play, with powerful offensive and defensive melee Skills. Players who thrive on close skirmishes with the enemy are especially happy when using Xion, since he gets right into the thick of things when using his best powers.

BIOGRAPHY

Xion has trained with physical swordsmanship and magic. Although much of his past is shrouded in mystery, it is clear that Xion comes from a line of warriors with incredible heart and prowess.

EQUIPMENT

Xion doesn't have unique equipment. In terms of stats, it is often easier to use Dark Xion and lean toward melee-based damage. This is aided by raising more Strength, Constitution, and some Agility. Avoid helms that require Intelligence. Look into the heavier gear, such as the Horned Helm and Chain Mail. These are the style of items to shoot for, stat-wise.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Xion is a well-balanced character because he has offensive and defensive Skills. He also benefits from being able to handle groups of foes and bosses with equal prowess. This is entirely fitting since he is the most commonly used character in the game (being the protagonist).

Use Thousand Thrusts to damage small pockets and bring down bosses; Xion also has Gravity Slash to push away and damage large squads of troops. Invest in Thousand Thrust early on, with lesser points put into his Auto Skills. Then, work on Gravity Slash and go back to heavy Auto Skill investments later.

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SKILLS

GUARD

STATS: LOCK ABILITY

Xion's Defense is increased when he uses his Lock Ability. This is useful in times when he is partnered with allies who may need time to finish their own actions while Xion distracts enemies. Ryuna can be blocked while she is healing or setting up a Link Skill; more aggressive characters may need time to get to the flank. The ideal situation here is for Xion to tear into an enemy group with a powerful attack of his own (a fully charged Thousand Thrust, perhaps), then to Guard if the enemies are still numerous while his partner moves in for a followup attack.

THOUSAND THRUST

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	# OF ATKS	ACC
1	1	5	+10	4	8
2	1	6	+16	4	8
3	2	7	+17	6	9
4	2	8	+22	6	9
5	2	9	+27	6	9
6	3	10	+28	8	10
7	3	11	+32	8	10
8	3	12	+36	8	10
9	3	13	+40	8	10
10	4	14	+41	10	11

Thousand Thrust is extremely powerful against clusters of enemies and bosses. One of the better abilities in terms of combat flexibility, it's rare to see someone who doesn't train Xion in this. Added Charge levels extend the number of thrusts in the attack, making this a beauty for damage and extending chains. For squads of troops, the key is to rush in and get an attack toward the center of the group (hitting as many targets as possible and pushing them away to prevent reprisals). Versus bosses, Xion is best positioned to their flank or back, charging the attack while the boss dedicates to a failed strike of their own; when this fails, Xion unleashes the full fury of Thousand Thrusts upon them!

THUNDER BLADE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	RANGE	ACC
1	1	5	+65	8	8
2	1	5	+74	8	8
3	2	6	+80	16	9
4	2	6	+86	16	9
5	2	6	+92	16	9
6	3	7	+97	24	10
7	3	7	+102	24	10
8	3	7	+107	24	10
9	3	7	+112	24	10
10	4	8	+116	32	11

Thunder Blade is not as ubiquitous as Thousand Thrust, but it can be useful against enemies who are weak versus Lightning power. This forward-facing attack gains a Knockback property when used by a Dark-aligned Xion.

SPARK

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	MAG	MAX TARGETS
1	1	5	+85	3
2	1	5	+97	3
3	2	6	+106	4
4	2	6	+115	4
5	2	6	+124	4
6	3	7	+132	5
7	3	7	+140	5
8	3	7	+148	5
9	3	7	+156	5
10	4	8	+163	6

Spark calls down Lightning over the nearby area. Less directed than Thunder Blade, it is easier to use this ability when fighting squads that are trying to surround Xion. Enemies hit by Spark have a chance of being affected by Paralysis. Because this is a Magic-based ability, a Light Xion is going to be more productive with it; also, having a higher Intelligence is going to make a sizable difference as well, so Dark Xion has more trouble getting the most out of Spark.

GRAVITY SLASH

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	RANGE	RADIUS
1	1	4	+105	112	80
2	1	4	+115	112	80
3	2	5	+122	120	84
4	2	5	+129	120	84
5	2	5	+136	120	84
6	3	6	+142	128	88
7	3	6	+148	128	88
8	3	6	+154	128	88
9	3	6	+160	128	88
10	4	7	+165	136	92

Gravity Slash is extremely useful for hitting large groups of enemies. Xion can charge into the center of a group (perhaps doing so by launching a Thousand Thrust attack), then prepare quickly for using a Gravity Slash to Paralyze and damage all those around him. Though appearing magical, Gravity Slash is a physical attack, so enemies with high resistance to elemental attacks are fully struck by it.

DEFENSE UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	DEF BONUS
1	5
2	8
3	11
4	13
5	15
6	17
7	19
8	21
9	23
10	25

The early levels of this Skill are quite powerful, especially in the initial parts of the game. Yet, diminishing returns kick in quite early, making it unprofitable to take Defense Up too high until much later on in Xion's career.

ACCURACY UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	PARTY ACC BONUS (%)
1	3
2	5
3	7
4	8
5	9
6	10
7	11
8	12
9	13
10	14

As with Defense Up, this Auto Skill is useful to take for a few ranks, as it improves Xion's Accuracy by a fair margin. One huge perk that pushes this Skill into the forefront early on is that it aids both Xion and his current partner, so it's even better when taken if you use two melee characters.

EVASION UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	PARTY EVA BONUS (%)
1	3
2	5
3	7
4	8
5	9
6	10
7	11
8	12
9	13
10	14

Continuing Xion's trend of great early Skills, Evasion Up augments his survivability beyond what Defense Up provides. An early regimen of Thousand Thrust, Accuracy, Evasion, and Defense are extremely solid for pushing Xion through the Normal Mode of *Shining Tears*. This is a second Skill that helps both Xion and his partner. If Xion is often paired with a mobile fighter (e.g., Volg and Mao), Evasion Up is positively splendid.

RESIST THUNDER

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	BONUS TO LIGHTNING RESISTANCE
1	7
2	13
3	19
4	24
5	29
6	34
7	38
8	42
9	46
10	50

This is one of the peripheral Skills that Xion should take later on, though it won't make a difference in many Normal Mode battles. Still, having a few ranks in this Skill can make a huge difference when facing Lightning casters. In the Tower of Heaven, any resistance boost is a great thing.

CHAIN POWER

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	ATK BONUS BY CHAIN (%)	MAX EFFECTIVE CHAIN
1	75	16
2	81	24
3	87	32
4	92	39
5	97	46
6	102	53
7	106	59
8	110	65
9	114	71
10	118	77

Chain Power adds to Xion's damage as his Chain Count rises. The effect is this is quite dramatic, and it is almost essential to improve Chain Power from time to time as Xion increases in level. Once this Auto Skill is up to a decent rank, rely on it as often as possible; use extremely fast attacks against large groups to keep your Chain value high. The difference in damage is enough to shorten missions most noticeably.

SYNCHRONIZE

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	ATK BONUS BY CHAIN (%)	MAX EFFECTIVE CHAIN
1	30	22
2	34	34
3	38	46
4	41	56
5	44	62
6	47	72
7	49	80
8	51	88
9	53	96
10	55	104

Much like Chain Power, this Skill adds to damage when the Chain Count rises. Synchronize adds less to damage in melee, but it has two major advantages. For one, it is cumulative with Chain Power, so there is no harm in choosing this as well. The other huge benefit is that Synchronize affects BOTH characters. If you pair with another melee class, Synchronize becomes even more important. Two-player mode takes the best advantage of this, as human players are able to keep their Chain value higher than the AI.

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ELWYN



Elwyn is an archer who is best in a support position, protected by Xion or another frontline character. Battles that have a number of fast enemies and flying troops are the ultimate realm of this lovely young Elf, who does extra damage against flying creatures and has no trouble eradicating enemies who try to pull back. In addition, Elwyn has the power to Charm enemies—disrupting their ranks and causing damage in the process—and to aid the party's rate of critical hits. Players who wish to pull enemies back to them and have the frontliners mop up would be quite happy with Elwyn as a partner.

BIOGRAPHY

Elwyn is an Elf who lives in the Forest of Spirits, found just south of Shildia. Although a bit obsessed with money, Elwyn has a fine sense of compassion and friendship, and she is well loved by the people of her community.

EQUIPMENT

Elwyn does have some equipment that is specific to her or is otherwise limited. The most notable of these are the Elven items that appear early on in the game. Elven equipment is easy for her to use and fits her attributes well anyway, since she is a balanced character with higher Agility. You won't need to alter your play strategy to use any of these pieces. After a few levels, the Royal Gown is a fair armor piece to use, as its stats are quite good for such simple requirements.

As an archer, the most important thing Elwyn can do is deal damage, and backline characters of this sort need a high output more than they need heavier gear. Watch the charts and upgrade Elwyn's bows at every opportunity. It's also worth spending the extra money and materials to get her bonus damage on top of that!

For accessories, look for the Penetration Bracelet or one of the items that adds damage/attack speed.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Played well, Elwyn stays behind the primary character and deals all of her damage from relative safety. This means she is able to focus more on offense than defense. Raise her Strength to help with her physical Skills and keep the rest of her attributes only high enough to match desirable armor.

Although other charters often try to pincer enemies, with Xion on one side and them on the other, Elwyn is different. Many of her best attacks are done with her partner in front of her, between her position and the enemy squad. This makes it much easier to defend Elwyn during even some of the heaviest fighting.

Most Link Skills that Elwyn uses take some time when compared to her fast and deadly Single Skills. It's usually easier to stick with these lighter attacks when dealing with squads in the normal levels. Only for bosses and specific circumstances should Elwyn break out the special attacks. This frees many points during level-ups to master Auto Skills quickly, thus aiding her Penetration and Criticals by a fair margin.

WILD SHOT

STATS: LOCK ABILITY

Elwyn's Lock Ability is to stand in place and loose arrow after arrow at the creatures around her. It's the perfect match for a backline archer and is useful when she isn't trying to use her Single Skills. Although not quite as fast as tapping the attack button, anyone in active control of Elwyn can leave their fingers on the button to keep firing.

RAPID FIRE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	# OF ATKS	ACC
1	1	3	+50	2	8
2	1	4	+58	2	8
3	2	5	+62	3	9
4	2	6	+67	3	9
5	2	7	+72	3	9
6	3	8	+75	4	10
7	3	9	+79	4	10
8	3	10	+83	4	10
9	3	11	+87	4	10
10	4	12	+89	5	11

Rapid Fire is a Strength-based Skill that fires arrows quickly and gives them extra damage at impact. Because this isn't a terribly expensive Single Skill, Elwyn players should use it frequently after lining up key shots. Rapid Fire adds dramatically to Elwyn's damage output, and indeed can surpass many of her slower, Link Skills, especially if her Penetration is high.

DRYAD'S ALLURE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	CHARM RATE	AREA OF EFFECT
1	1	2	50	32
2	1	2	60	32
3	2	3	68	48
4	2	3	75	48
5	2	3	81	48
6	3	4	86	64
7	3	4	90	64
8	3	4	94	64
9	3	4	97	64
10	4	5	100	80

Dryad's Allure is used to Charm enemies at range. Although not a way to deal damage directly, this disrupts enemy forces and turns them against each other, sometimes offering them far more problems than even a deadly strike! This is best used against squads that are mobile and able to break apart well (archers, casters, and airborne targets). This way, you are able to keep the sections of troops that move away from all turning on your back.

MULTISHOT

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC + (%)	ARROWS
1	250	8	10	10	3
2	265	9	18	11	3
3	280	11	24	12	4
4	295	12	31	13	4
5	310	13	38	14	4
6	325	15	43	15	5
7	340	16	49	16	5
8	355	17	55	17	5
9	370	18	61	18	5
10	385	20	65	19	6

Multishot has a somewhat higher cost for the damage done, but it doesn't take long to prepare or enact. Taking several ranks and getting up to four or five arrows is quite sufficient if this Link Skill interests you. Pair Multishot with a high Penetration value for maximum impact against full squads of troops.

RETURN ARROW

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC + (%)
1	250	3	180	10
2	265	4	195	11
3	280	5	210	12
4	295	6	224	13
5	310	7	238	14
6	325	8	252	15
7	340	9	265	16
8	355	10	278	17
9	370	11	291	18
10	385	12	304	19

Return Arrow leaves Xion and Elwyn exposed for quite a long time. In exchange, this Link Skill often hits many foes in a squad while going past Xion and again during its return trip. The total damage from Return Arrow is thus quite high at a low cost. It's simply a matter of how high your Defense and Hit Points are, because both characters take a beating in the process.

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ELEMENTAL SHOT

STATS: LINK SKILL			
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +
1	250	3	250
2	265	4	270
3	280	5	290
4	295	6	309
5	310	7	328
6	325	8	347
7	340	9	365
8	355	10	383
9	370	11	401
10	385	12	419

Elemental Shot is a curious Skill. For a single attack, this Skill does high damage without much of a Skill Point cost, and it can be used ahead of time. The shot travels to Elwyn's partner and circles him or her until a target is found. All of those are potent benefits. Elemental Shot is good to take into boss fights because of this, especially those fights where the boss is only exposed to damage at certain times. For clearing squads, however, Elemental Shot isn't a good choice, since only a single foe bears the brunt of the Skill's fury.

GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL					
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +	SUMMONINGS	CHARM RATE (%)
1	250	35	280	4	60
2	265	38	300	5	70
3	280	41	320	6	78
4	295	44	339	7	85
5	310	47	358	8	91
6	325	50	377	9	96
7	340	53	395	10	100
8	355	56	413	11	104
9	370	59	431	12	107
10	385	62	449	13	110

This summon is Intelligence-based, unlike the other Single and Link Skills in Elwyn's repertoire. This might be a problem, but these Guardians are able to Charm foes, making up for using a secondary attribute in a big way. If a situation becomes too intense, this Skill can turn the tide of battle, even if it isn't meant to be used frequently.

PENETRATION UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	PENETRATION RATE (%)
1	7
2	11
3	15
4	18
5	21
6	24
7	26
8	28
9	30
10	32

Penetration Up does not help Elwyn's partners, but it alters the way she is able to damage enemies. Instead of shooting at single targets, Elwyn is able to pierce through rows of troops with her arrows once her Penetration is reliably high. This improves her Single and Link Skills as well, meaning that some of her most potent attacks become even better. Improve Penetration Up consistently as Elwyn rises in level.

ANTI-AERIAL

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	DAMAGE BONUS VS. AERIALS (%)
1	12
2	21
3	30
4	38
5	46
6	54
7	61
8	68
9	75
10	82

This Auto Skill turns Elwyn into a slayer of all airborne beasts. There are a number of weak and powerful targets in Shining Tears that fly, so do not dismiss this trait. Anti-Aerial is primarily a late-game choice, since Elwyn has more pressing Skill needs while building her early levels, but players in Advanced Mode make the most use out of this by specializing Elwyn to destroy Aerials, just as they might pull in Ryuna for Undead levels.

SYLPH'S PROTECTION

STATS: AUTO SKILL		
SKILL LEVEL	EVASION RATE (%)	AREA
1	8	80
2	11	84
3	16	88
4	20	92
5	24	96
6	28	100
7	31	104
8	34	108
9	37	112
10	40	116

This Skill gives Elwyn an area of protection against incoming missile fire. While many characters receive some form of protection against various magics, this is the only Skill to provide direct protection against mundane archers. Although of lesser importance during the average mission, any ability to thwart groups of archers is a boon in the places where they are found in high concentrations.

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RYUNA



Ryuna represents the height of assistance as a support character. Although lacking in terms of direct-damage abilities, this healer is able to restore party Hit Points over time, restore damage to her partner directly, and expose enemies to higher elemental damage. In addition, Undead take much more damage when some of Ryuna's Skills are developed, making some sections of the game far easier to complete. While many battles are slightly slower-paced when Ryuna is chosen as a partner, she raises survivability and profitability by a tremendous margin.

BIOGRAPHY

Ryuna has been raised in the faith of Etwahl her entire life, so she is steeped in a culture of piety and equality. She has a level head and a fierce sense of justice, even in the face of danger. Her long-time friendship with the Dragonman Lazarus has kept her safe this long, at least, and his protection is something that she relies on heavily when taking chances.

EQUIPMENT

Armor like the Chihaya is made for Ryuna and is easy for her to slip into with an early balance of Agility and Constitution. Later on, Ryuna players have a few interesting choices to make. The natural route for a caster would be to grab as much equipment with Magic bonuses and to perk Intelligence whenever possible. However, take a look at what Ryuna uses most often; Cure and Blessing do not benefit from a higher Magic rating! Indeed, Ryuna gains almost nothing from having a high Intelligence, save for more Skill Points, and many of her Skills are efficient as it is.

This leads to an exciting build option for daring types. Instead of the caster route, treat Ryuna as a heavy hitter. Raise her Strength and Constitution, then add a bit to Agility. Ignore Intelligence beyond the first few points, and plan a route toward heavy helms and armor. Ryuna still isn't going to mix it up and deal damage, but she is going to last longer and survive well when confronted. You know that Lazarus is going to enjoy the results.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Ryuna is never going to be the best frontliner. Instead, she stays back to heal and buff your primary character while using Link Skills to destroy Undead. Protect her by positioning her behind Xion and pile on Cure and Blessing. With the appropriate armor and build, there is far less micro-management once Ryuna gets into heavier armor. Because of this, she can engage in supportive melee combat without you being forced to pull her back. At that point, Ryuna becomes one of the easier AI characters to manage, as she buffs and heals while contributing a slice of damage to the party.

SKILLS

HOLY BARRIER

STATS: LOCK ABILITY

Holy Barrier would be a godsend in many horror movies; Ryuna is able to ward off the Undead while Locked. This doesn't come up very often, but it is useful when Xion is busy getting around to flank Undead squads. Lock Ryuna to keep her from being exposed while making such maneuvers, then, Turn Undead when Xion is in position for great effect!

BLESSING

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK +	DEF +	DURATION
1	1	6	4	4	12
2	1	7	7	7	12
3	2	8	9	9	18
4	2	9	11	11	18
5	2	10	13	13	18
6	3	11	15	15	24
7	3	12	17	17	24
8	3	13	19	19	24
9	3	14	21	21	24
10	4	15	23	23	30

Blessing is a wonderful ability with which to aid any close-attack character. Xion needs both the Attack and Defense provided by this Skill, so it is one that pays for itself well, even when many points are added. In Advanced Mode, where many Skills suffer from diminishing returns after their tenth rank, Blessing is worth the higher costs because of the immense boost it gives to both characters.

CURE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	HP RESTORED	SP RESTORED
1	1	6	6	2
2	1	6	10	2
3	2	7	13	5
4	2	7	16	5
5	2	7	19	5
6	3	8	21	10
7	3	8	23	10
8	3	8	25	10
9	3	8	27	10
10	4	9	29	16

Cure is ideal for keeping the primary character alive, of course, but it has benefits far beyond that. This Skill restores both Hit Points and Skill Points; this gives characters like Xion free rein to use more point-intensive Skills without needing restorative items to keep himself going. By using Cure, Ryuna dramatically raises the profitability of a pairing, since few items are used at all.

SHINING

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	3	240
2	265	4	261
3	280	5	282
4	295	6	300
5	310	7	318
6	325	8	336
7	340	9	351
8	355	10	366
9	370	11	381
10	385	12	396

Shining is a Link Skill for direct attack, but even with high Intelligence Ryuna suffers a bit in that field. Although the top damage for this spell is fairly high, it is possible to "roll" poorly and end up doing less damage compared to the risk of using the Link. Instead, Shining should be reserve for use in rare cases where Ryuna needs to deal direct damage.

TURN UNDEAD

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	4	100
2	265	5	121
3	280	6	142
4	295	7	161
5	310	8	180
6	325	9	199
7	340	10	216
8	355	11	233
9	370	12	250
10	385	13	267

Turn Undead not only damages Undead but also destroys those Undead creatures who are able to resurrect themselves. To receive full rewards and experience from levels with Skeletons and tougher Mummies, Turn Undead is the only efficient course. There are some battles in which this Skill is absolutely essential. Even a low-level Ryuna is worthwhile for these areas. Her partner can clear the Undead before bringing her forward to Turn Undead against the bodies and destroy them.

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SPIRITUAL WARD

STATS: LINK SKILL			
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	3	95
2	265	4	109
3	280	5	123
4	295	6	135
5	310	7	147
6	325	8	159
7	340	9	170
8	355	10	181
9	370	11	192
10	385	12	203

Spiritual Ward works to slow enemies while damaging the squad somewhat. This is adequate when used at low ranks, but the higher ranks don't scale as well as Ryuna's incredible Single Skills, so more points should be used in those areas after securing a rank here.

GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL			
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	35	200
2	265	38	225
3	280	41	250
4	295	44	272
5	310	47	294
6	325	50	316
7	340	53	335
8	355	56	354
9	370	59	373
10	385	62	392

A surprise to those who haven't looked closely, this summon is based off of Ryuna's Attack (thus, it's a Strength-based Link Skill). It's costly, but the ability to drain life from foes compensates well and puts this forward as a keen way to save the party from desperate situations.

HEALING AURA

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	HP RECOVERY/100 SECONDS
1	15
2	27
3	39
4	50
5	61
6	72
7	82
8	92
9	102
10	112

Ryuna's Cure spells only aid the primary character, but her Healing Aura is divine for saving both characters. This Skill passively raises Hit Points over time and functions constantly. At higher levels, Healing Aura restores enough Hit Points to be worthwhile in any group. Diminishing returns doesn't hit Healing Aura hard at all either, so its effectiveness does not dwindle even in the upper ranks, well into the higher ranks of Advanced Mode.

PURIFICATION

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	STATUS RECOVERY RATE (%)
1	12
2	24
3	36
4	48
5	60
6	72
7	84
8	96
9	108
10	120

By reducing the duration of status effects, Ryuna reduces the need for healing from poisons and saves the day when it comes to debilitating effects (e.g., Slowed while fighting archers or casters). Purification is secondary to Ryuna's Single Skills and her other Auto Skills, but it's worth putting mid- and late-game points into this, for times when battles are longer and far more complex.

HOLY POWER

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	DAMAGE INCREASE VS. UNDEAD (%)
1	8
2	15
3	22
4	28
5	34
6	40
7	45
8	50
9	55
10	60

Holy Power gives Undead-busting damage to both party members. Players who choose Ryuna specifically for this purpose are going to love the difference Holy Power makes; throw many ranks into this Skill and add a few points to Turn Undead as well. Together, Ryuna and her partner become quite effective at destroying large Undead squads; the Tower of Heaven has entire levels of this sort.

ELEMENTAL BREAK

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	ENEMY RESISTANCE PENALTY
1	4
2	7
3	10
4	12
5	14
6	16
7	18
8	20
9	22
10	24

Ryuna weakens many enemies because of her Elemental Break. The penalty this gives to nearby enemies covers all elements; that practically equates to major damage bonuses compared to partners who aren't using this Auto Skill. When using weapons or spells with elemental effects, this Skill offers a greater damage bonus, in a reverse kind of fashion, over almost any other Auto Skill. Elemental Break only gets better with time, because enemy resistances become greater and greater with higher levels of Shining Tears.



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LAZARUS



Lazarus is a heavily armored frontline fighter. What he lacks in subtlety, he makes up for in power and endurance. Wearing especially strong defensive equipment, Lazarus is able to stay in the center of enemies without going down quickly. Added to this, this Dragonman has attack Skills that are brutal for breaking apart enemy lines. A party with Xion and Lazarus needs a fair supply of healing items, but battles are short and exciting when they combine their martial prowess.

BIOGRAPHY

Lazarus doesn't talk much about himself, and that is because of his intense focus on other people (especially the Priestess Ryuna). Lazarus is courageous, proud, and ready to sacrifice anything to protect those who he considers worthy.

EQUIPMENT

Lazarus benefits from the best character-specific equipment in the game. The Dragon Helms and Dragon Armor are found relatively early in the campaign, and these heavy pieces provide incredible protection without requiring Intelligence or Agility (considering how Lazarus acts, that is a very good thing). This frees the big guy to raise only Strength and Constitution, making him a powerhouse of damage and survivability.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Have Xion wear something light enough for high mobility, then use that speed to flank enemy forces. Put the enemies between Xion and Lazarus, then harp on Dragon Spiral. Draw the enemies toward Xion and let Lazarus spin into their midst, killing everything as he goes. Retreat while fighting to get the maximum duration out of this ability. In addition, equip an item that gives Lazarus more Skill Points to keep from running out as quickly.

That combo, by itself, makes Lazarus a worth ally and an obscene candidate for fastest killer in your lineup, especially in Normal Mode. Even in Advanced Mode, this routine piles on damage at an incredible rate.

Against dangerous enemy squads, put Lazarus in front and have him trigger the encounter. The enemies swarm him instead of Xion, and that makes it easier to flank them and avoid heavier damage. With Lazarus' higher armor and Hit Points, he is able to take so much punishment that it's almost a good thing when he gets hit.

SKILLS

DRAGONFIRE

STATS: LOCK ABILITY

Dragonfire deals magical damage while Lazarus stands in place and unleashes his ancestral fury. As nice as it looks, this is not a terribly powerful effect, since magic is often not Lazarus' forte in the first place. Still, you couldn't ask for a more distracting or intimidating attack.

WHEEL SLASH

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	# OF ATKS	ACC
1	1	4	+30	1	8
2	1	4	+38	1	8
3	2	5	+43	2	9
4	2	5	+48	2	9
5	2	5	+53	2	9
6	3	6	+57	3	10
7	3	6	+61	3	10
8	3	6	+65	3	10
9	3	6	+69	3	10
10	4	7	+72	4	11

Wheel Slash has the arc and damage to punish any melee swarms that try to overcome this behemoth. Anyone who uses Lazarus heavily should invest in at least several ranks of this fine Single Skill. Wheel Slash is even better when a second player can position Lazarus for maximum effectiveness!

HEAVY BLOW

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	KNOCKBACK	ACC +
1	1	2	+90	32	8
2	1	2	+98	32	8
3	2	3	+103	48	9
4	2	3	+108	48	9
5	2	3	+113	48	9
6	3	4	+117	64	10
7	3	4	+121	64	10
8	3	4	+125	64	10
9	3	4	+129	64	10
10	4	5	+132	80	11

Heavy Blow has an impressive effect in terms of throwing things out of the way, but it doesn't always fit with Lazarus' place in a party. Pushing the enemies away from Lazarus is good when he is trying to defend himself (which is necessary from time to time), but the total damage of Heavy Blow isn't enough to pull down larger targets or high numbers of foes. It's better to have this Skill and know when to use than to push it into the higher levels.

DRAGON SPIRAL

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC + (%)
1	250	10	10	10
2	265	12	17	11
3	280	14	24	12
4	295	16	30	13
5	310	18	36	14
6	325	20	42	15
7	340	22	47	16
8	355	24	52	17
9	370	26	57	18
10	385	28	62	19

Take a point or two of Dragon Spiral and use this Link Skill heavily. On the attack, this allows Lazarus to roll through entire masses of enemies, breaking apart multiple squads simultaneously when used well. While Xion runs ahead, Lazarus tries to catch up to him while twirling around and killing the whole way. Xion can make light attacks while constantly shifting position to get Lazarus to hit as many foes as possible. This Skill is made of gold. Yes, taking Dragon Spiral too far up may not be as wise as it first seems; the increase in SP cost is dramatic, and the improvement in power isn't enough to compensate unless you are willing to use many restorative items. A middle ground of six or so ranks should do quite nicely.

IRONSKIN

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	DAMAGE REFLECTION (%)
1	250	12	25
2	265	14	34
3	280	16	43
4	295	18	51
5	310	20	59
6	325	22	67
7	340	24	74
8	355	26	81
9	370	28	88
10	385	30	95

Ironskin progresses well statistically. This ability reflects incoming damage with fair efficiency later on, though this effect only stacks well if Lazarus is taking a huge number of hits during a 10-second period. Most of the time, this won't be quite as major a damage dealer for your party as Dragon Spiral, though it's perfectly possible to hit Ironskin before going forward for other attacks, so the two are not mutually exclusive.

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DOUBLE ATTACK

STATS: LINK SKILL					
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC + (%)	BONUS ATK +
1	250	3	110	10	80
2	265	4	124	11	85
3	280	5	138	12	90
4	295	6	151	13	95
5	310	7	164	14	100
6	325	8	177	15	105
7	340	9	189	16	110
8	355	10	201	17	115
9	370	11	213	18	120
10	385	12	225	19	125

Double Attack is meant to be used against very small groups or versus bosses. The trick is to line Xion and Lazarus up, facing each other, and get the boss in between them. Done in this manner, the two can hit the hapless target very hard for extremely high melee damage. On top of that, this Link Skill isn't very costly in Skill Points.

GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL			
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	35	240
2	265	38	270
3	280	41	300
4	295	44	326
5	310	47	352
6	325	50	378
7	340	53	400
8	355	56	422
9	370	59	444
10	385	62	466

Lazarus' Guardian Summon deals only modest damage because of his lower Intelligence and Magic, but the visual appeal of this ability may compensate for that. A player who is interested in doing things in a completely non-standard and challenging way could take on the task of making an Intelligence-based Lazarus with a better summon power and more frequent use of his physical attacks because of a higher Skill Point total (it wouldn't be easy, but it could be fun to show others).

ATTACK UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	ATK +
1	5
2	8
3	11
4	13
5	15
6	17
7	19
8	21
9	23
10	25

Take three ranks of this fairly early, due to its high efficiency for that time, then continue to add to Attack Up whenever you can spare the point. Any free damage is a good thing for Lazarus. Trying to raise his damage through higher Single/Link Skills means higher costs (and that is bad for a guy who barely has any Skill Points). Thus, Attack Up is a great way to raise damage safely.

DEFENSE UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	DEF +
1	5
2	8
3	11
4	13
5	15
6	17
7	19
8	21
9	23
10	25

Again, a few early points are nice, but perhaps only one in this case. Lazarus already gets many early defensive perks because of the special Dragon equipment. Defense Up is a good one to come back to later, once Wheel Slash, Dragon Spiral, and other offensive tools are perfected.

RESIST FIRE

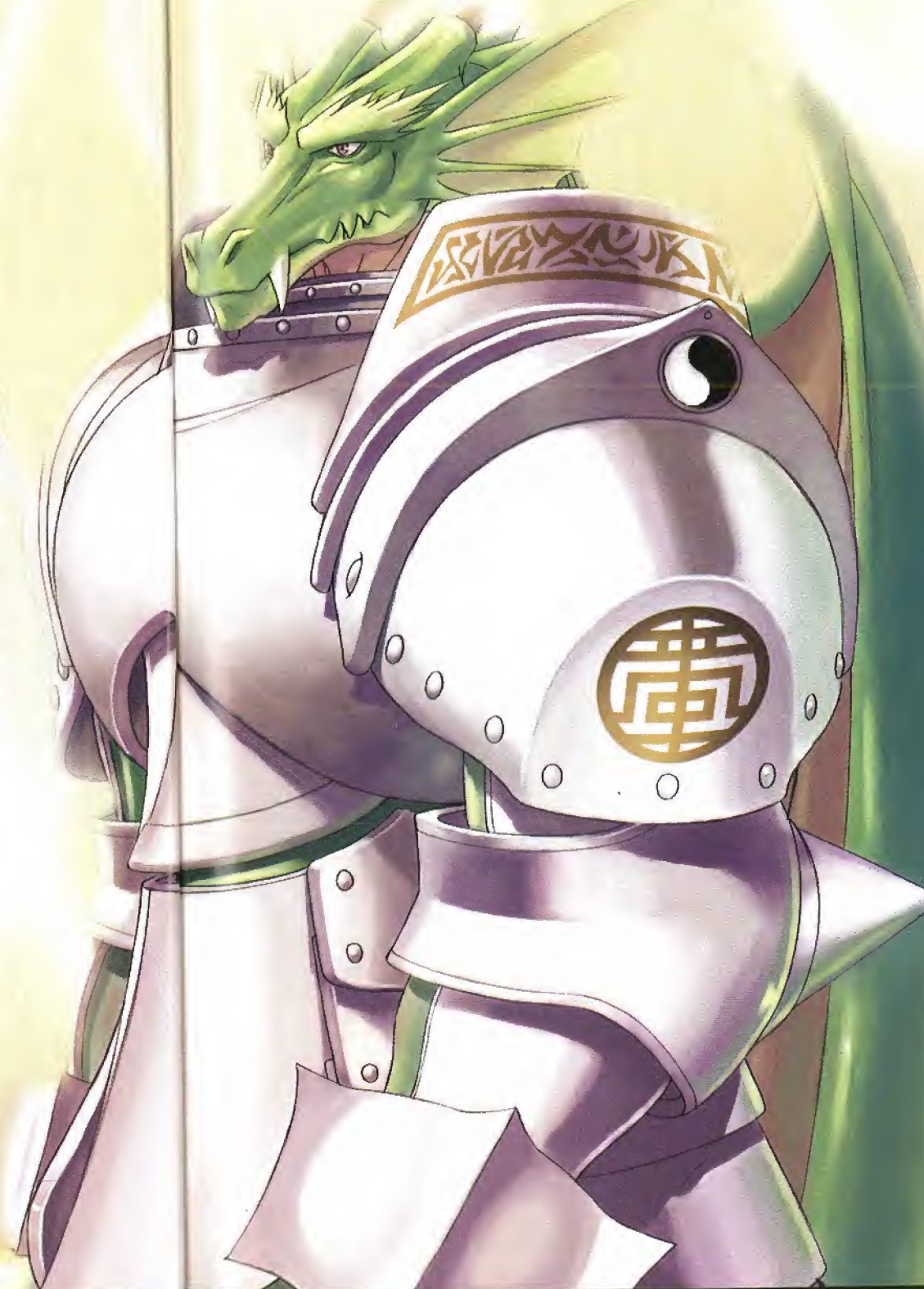
STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	BONUS TO FIRE RESISTANCE
1	7
2	13
3	19
4	24
5	29
6	34
7	38
8	42
9	46
10	50

Put points into Resist Fire as you reach Advanced Mode and start to have spare points (and a need) for extra elemental protection.

ARMOR CRUSH

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	DEF CHANGE/HIT
1	4
2	7
3	10
4	12
5	14
6	16
7	18
8	20
9	22
10	24

Armor Crush may seem of modest value in Normal Mode, where so many enemies disappear after a single round of major attacks, but this changes in Advanced Mode. Having a number of points in Armor Crush can really help the damage output of Lazarus and Xion against even squad-level targets when facing the higher stats of foes in the Level 40+ range.



NEIGE



Neige is a master of ice magic; her spells delay and frustrate enemy efforts while she dishes out ranged damage. Used with guile, Neige allows greater defensive fighting for her partner while reducing the enemy's ability to sustain cold damage. Because Neige restores everyone's Skill Points over time, she allows a pair to use more Link Skills and Single Skills without restorative items or waiting for natural regeneration. This improves sustained damage over longer encounters! Neige is for players with a desire for magic, ranged damage, and a style of play with more interdiction.

BIOGRAPHY

Blanc Neige doesn't speak about her past, although her reasons may be different than those of Lazarus. This woman mulls over a quiet drink in the Heroes' Hearth, and it may take quite some time to draw her out.

EQUIPMENT

Few items are made for Neige, but her path of upgrades is still clear. As a full caster, Neige relies heavily on her Magic to contribute, so anything with high bonuses in that regard is perfect. Slip on a Mage Cap as soon as possible for its huge Magic boost; use smiths to increase the item's defensive bonuses later. Next, work toward fitting into a suit of Rune Plate. This armor is made just for people like Neige, and this ends up being one of the few things that keeps Neige from getting diced by melee attackers.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Link Attacks make all the difference with this Ice Mage. Position Xion in the thick of things to draw attention away from Neige; have her stay at the periphery and Link to obliterate squads with Ice Ring. For more defensive fighting, Ice Wall is unfairly wonderful because it damages foes and destroys those that try to advance.

Use Ice Wall heavily against larger targets and bosses. Some of the most critical fights in the game are almost preempted by the crafty use of Ice Wall. Drop the spell where bosses will be and watch the poor fiends impale themselves on it while Xion slashes away.

SKILLS

SNOW VEIL

STATS: LOCK ABILITY

Snow Veil freezes enemies while Neige runs past them. This is useful when Neige is engaged in close combat and needs to quickly retreat without having everything follow her for free attacks. For this reason, and others, Neige runs almost everywhere and shouldn't bother walking unless the encounter is quite safe.

ICE BREATH

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	MAG	RANGE
1	1	4	+65	96
2	1	4	+76	96
3	2	5	+84	104
4	2	5	+92	104
5	2	5	+100	104
6	3	6	+106	112
7	3	6	+112	112
8	3	6	+118	112
9	3	6	+124	112
10	4	7	+129	120

Ice Breath is a valuable Single Skill for times when Neige is being kept out of Link combat. This spell has a better breadth of attacks than its counterpart, Freeze, but it lacks the greater range of its rival. More brazen and deadly Neige players can trust to Ice Breath while somewhat wary and lower Hit Point versions of this character may prefer the relative safety of Freeze.

FREEZE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	MAG	MAX DIAMETER	RANGE
1	1	2	+65	32	128
2	1	2	+76	32	128
3	2	3	+84	40	156
4	2	3	+92	40	156
5	2	3	+100	40	156
6	3	4	+106	48	184
7	3	4	+112	48	184
8	3	4	+118	48	184
9	3	4	+124	48	184
10	4	5	+129	56	212

Freeze does the same damage as Ice Breath, but it offers greater safety and slightly lower damage to large groups, since Ice Breath can slap groups better than Freeze can. Both of these are useful, so the choice is primarily one of the character build.

BLIZZARD

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	10	110
2	265	11	121
3	280	12	132
4	295	13	142
5	310	14	152
6	325	15	162
7	340	16	171
8	355	17	180
9	370	18	189
10	385	19	198

Blizzard is a beautiful spell to watch, and it can cover a very large area. However, this gorgeous spell has a major downside: it's low in cost, but Blizzard puts Neige and her partner at major risk for counterattacks, since it has a cooldown afterward where neither person can defend the other. This leads to a cost in terms of Hit Points that makes it hard to safely use Blizzard against powerful foes. Blizzard is better saved for a finishing move.

ICE WALL

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +	MAXIMUM LENGTH
1	250	13	95	160
2	265	14	108	170
3	280	15	121	180
4	295	16	132	190
5	310	17	143	200
6	325	18	154	210
7	340	19	164	220
8	355	20	174	230
9	370	21	184	240
10	385	22	194	250

Ice Wall is a spell for patient players, but it pays for itself many times over once used properly. Against incoming troops, Neige can form a wall between herself and her partner. This wall causes damage to anything that crosses it; even better is that it continuously damages everything that stays on its boundary for the full 10-second duration. This means that bosses and other powerful creatures that can be lured onto the Ice Wall take egregious quantities of damage. The only major problem with Ice Wall is that it takes setup time, so some people may not have as much fun with it.

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ICE RING

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +	MAX DIAMETER
1	250	10	100	200
2	265	11	111	204
3	280	12	121	208
4	295	13	132	212
5	310	14	142	216
6	325	15	152	220
7	340	16	161	224
8	355	17	170	228
9	370	18	179	232
10	385	19	188	236

Ice Ring is fairly quick for a Link Skill and deals heavy damage in a circle around both Neige and her partner. This means that a divided pair can strike two or three squads of enemies at the same time, defeating entire sets of foes with two or three fast castings! It's not as Skill Point efficient as Ice Wall because there is no duration on Ice Ring, but this spell has great potential to clear large areas quickly. Daring Neige players should be very happy with Ice Ring, even if Ice Wall has better efficiency.

GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	NUMBER SUMMONED
1	250	35	280	4
2	265	38	300	5
3	280	41	320	6
4	295	44	339	7
5	310	47	358	8
6	325	50	377	9
7	340	53	395	10
8	355	56	413	11
9	370	59	431	12
10	385	62	449	13

As with many summoning spells, Neige can take a substantial break from battle to bring a moderately heavy sum of damage to enemies over a large area. Though potent, this costs quite a chunk of Skill Points and halts the game for a time while the spell occurs. This slows down missions, so the more active players may prefer Neige's other Link Skills. An additional problem is that the damage done by Neige's Guardian Summon is aided by her Attack value, which is often lower than her Magic by quite a margin.

FROZEN ARMOR

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	DEFENSE +	ICE RESISTANCE +
1	4	4
2	6	6
3	8	8
4	10	10
5	12	12
6	14	14
7	16	16
8	18	18
9	20	20
10	22	22

Frozen Armor adds to Neige's Defense and Ice Resistance, so it is quite efficient in raising her survivability. Players who put Neige into direct skirmishes benefit the most from this and should strongly consider going for many ranks in it later in her career. Those who use Neige at longer range with more caution won't reap the rewards from Frozen Armor as intensely.

RESIST MAGIC

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAGICAL DEF +
1	6
2	11
3	16
4	20
5	24
6	28
7	31
8	34
9	37
10	40

Resist Magic directly adds to Neige's Magical Defense. Use this as heavily as you wish to raise her sustained fighting power against other casters, at range. Single players who don't have the ability to perfectly micro-manage Neige see the best results here. Those who use Neige in a two-player setting are already able to avoid many incoming magical attacks.



MEDITATION

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	SP RECOVERY/100 SECONDS
1	50
2	90
3	130
4	160
5	190
6	220
7	240
8	260
9	280
10	300

Meditation is a money saver and a great boon because it reduces party reliance on restoration Skill Point items. The early ranks of this Skill are stunningly effective, and few players should avoid taking Meditation to at least the fifth rank or so.

ICE BREAK

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	PENALTY TO FOE ICE RESISTANCE
1	-5
2	-9
3	-13
4	-16
5	-19
6	-22
7	-24
8	-26
9	-28
10	-30

Because of the impressive resistance levels that most enemies have later in the game, Neige often benefits from having a high rank in Ice Break. Put points into this Skill whenever possible. Consider what happens when enemies are able to resist Ice properly—everything Neige has is Ice based. From that perspective, can anyone afford not to master Ice Break?

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VOLG



Volg is just as aggressive as you would expect from a Wolfman. This bestial commander gets into enemy formations and cuts them to ribbons. Fast moving and with high damage potential, Volg is for people who care more about destroying the enemy than maintaining their health! Battles are shorter with Volg around, and he requires a fair bit of healing and support in the form of protecting his flanks and such. This reduces the profitability from a battle, due to the use of heavy healing, the action is intense when Volg takes the stage. Anyone who loves heated combat should give Volg a long look.

BIOGRAPHY

The owner of the Heroes' Hearth, Volg is a terse individual that requires time to open up to people. He comes across as somewhat abrupt and maybe a bit rude at times. However, there are hints that Volg was not always an innkeeper, and the clientele of the Heroes' Hearth are not your everyday travelers.

EQUIPMENT

Volg gets a few interesting equipment pieces during the middle game. Wolf gear can only be used by Volg (shockingly), and is fast stuff. If your desire is speed, speed and more speed, go for the Wolf gear as soon as possible. Otherwise, take the long road and use Strength and Constitution to work toward heavy equipment. For a time, this won't help Volg as he loses the early advantage of getting into his Agility gear. However, having Strength and Constitution means quite a bit for the late-game equipment, and Volg won't have any trouble meeting the Agility requirements for those goodies.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Always have a ton of healing items around and don't be shy about using them. Volg tears into problems teeth-first, and that gets him hurt all the time. Before you have the best and most impressive armor and helms, it can be quite alarming how much damage Volg takes. Fear not; his survivability eventually catches up.

The tradeoff is that Volg offers huge amounts of damage without much cost in Skill Points. Rush forward with Xion and take squads from different directions. Nothing lasts for long against this. Bosses are no different; Volg and Xion eat them alive and feel no pity. Use Thousand Thrust from Xion and Gatling Punch from Volg.

QUICKSTEP

STATS: RUN ABILITY

Quickstep makes Volg even faster than he already is just by walking. When he runs, he covers huge distances without wasting any items as nothing can keep up with him, or even come close.

FLYING CLAW

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	LUNGE	ACC +
1	1	3	+90	32	8
2	1	3	+99	32	8
3	2	4	+105	48	9
4	2	4	+111	48	9
5	2	4	+117	48	9
6	3	5	+122	64	10
7	3	5	+127	64	10
8	3	5	+132	64	10
9	3	5	+137	64	10
10	4	6	+141	80	11

Flying Claw covers distance, does fair damage, and looks great. The only downside of using this Single Skill as opposed to Gatling Punch is that it can be harder to land; you need to know ahead of time where your enemy will be in a moment's time.

GATLING PUNCH

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	# OF ATKS	ACC +
1	1	4	+50	4	8
2	1	5	+58	4	8
3	2	6	+62	6	9
4	2	7	+67	6	9
5	2	8	+72	6	9
6	3	9	+75	8	10
7	3	10	+79	8	10
8	3	11	+83	8	10
9	3	12	+87	8	10
10	4	13	+89	10	11

Gatling Punch allows Volg to synchronize with Xion's Thousand Thrust. When these two skills work together against the same squad or boss, the total damage is stunning. Volg hits multiple times, doing fairly decent damage with each hit. Indeed, Gatling Punch is a perfect boss killer, especially in two-player mode.

On top of this, both Volg and Xion are able to improve their overall damage immensely through high Chain values. This Single Skill boosts Chain quickly, meaning that Volg starts to drop many more critical hits into the mix early in the battle.

SKILLS

DEATH MOON CIRCLE

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC +
1	100	10	70	10
2	110	12	83	11
3	120	14	96	12
4	130	16	107	13
5	140	18	118	14
6	150	20	129	15
7	160	22	138	16
8	170	24	147	17
9	180	26	156	18
10	190	28	165	19

Death Moon Circle is a specific Link Skill; it takes practice lining up things for Volg to get a full rush around the enemies and complete the process. The perks for this are a substantial amount of damage for a somewhat low Skill Point cost.

TWIN TACKLE

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC +
1	100	3	110	10
2	110	4	126	11
3	120	5	142	12
4	130	6	156	13
5	140	7	170	14
6	150	8	184	15
7	160	9	196	16
8	170	10	208	17
9	180	11	220	18
10	190	12	232	19

Twin Tackle is easy to initiate, and this makes it useful for times when Xion has more complex moves to complete (e.g., going in single-player mode). The damage is a tad lower than Drill Crusher, but the ease of use makes up for that in a number of battles.

DRILL CRUSHER

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC +	LUNGE
1	100	4	230	10	150
2	110	5	250	11	160
3	120	6	270	12	170
4	130	7	289	13	180
5	140	8	308	14	190
6	150	9	327	15	200
7	160	10	345	16	210
8	170	11	363	17	220
9	180	12	381	18	230
10	190	13	399	19	240

Drill Crusher provides huge damage benefits compared to the other Link Skills in Volg's lineup. For that reason, it is a fine choice for at least a couple of ranks. Yet, this is not an ability for bringing down bosses and other difficult targets because it works out of synch with what Volg's partner is doing. This is more of a move to clear squads out of the way when Volg is surrounded.

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GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL				
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	SUMMONINGS
1	250	35	160	4
2	265	38	165	5
3	280	41	170	6
4	295	44	174	7
5	310	47	178	8
6	325	50	182	9
7	340	53	185	10
8	355	56	188	11
9	370	59	191	12
10	385	62	194	13

Volg uses his summon to physical wound and Paralyze enemies. This Link Spell is quite heavy in Skill Points, and Volg often cannot hold up to the costs of the higher-rank versions of the spell. This Guardian Summon is more appropriately used for getting a breather than for bringing down piles of enemies.

BATTLE CRY

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	ATK + (%)
1	5
2	9
3	13
4	16
5	19
6	22
7	24
8	26
9	28
10	30

Battle Cry improves Volg's Attack based on this level of Skill Points. This means a higher-Intelligence Volg gets quite a bit from those, while the more common Volg builds only gain moderately. For the best return on investment, put three points in earlier on, then only continue during Advanced Mode play or if you are augmenting Volg's Intelligence anyway.

FAST MOVE

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	MOVEMENT IMPROVEMENT (%)
1	10
2	16
3	22
4	27
5	32
6	37
7	41
8	45
9	49
10	53

Volg is already one of the fastest characters in the game, and this Auto Skill pushes him over the top. In the hands of an active player, Fast Move is tremendously fun because of what it allows Volg to do. He can position himself anywhere without enemy squads having a say in the matter. The only problem at all is that the AI goes a bit rampant if Volg is too fast, and he gets himself in trouble.

LUCKY STRIKE

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	CRITICAL RATE BONUS BY CHAIN (%)
1	25
2	49
3	73
4	96
5	119
6	142
7	164
8	186
9	208
10	230

There is no lasting cost for having a high Lucky Strike, and this entirely fits Volg's style of heated combat. Take this early and keep raising it as often as possible. Improve Gatling Punch as well, and watch what happens! The AI does not make as much use of this as a player can, so this particular build gains tremendous value if you have a friend to take over Volg's actions.

COUNTERATTACK

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	COUNTERATTACK RATE (%)
1	7
2	13
3	19
4	24
5	29
6	34
7	38
8	42
9	46
10	50

Counterattacks are usually obscene in tactical games, but *Shining Tears* has such large-scale fights that this Skill isn't overpowered. Indeed, Volg gets to return a number of attacks, but the damage isn't terribly high compared to the platters of suffering that he delivers to squads on a regular basis. Best to put in a few ranks here in Volg's middle levels.



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MAO



Mao is not a backline character! Indeed, this fiery girl is fast, aggressive, and able to deal substantial damage to the enemy with her attacks. Using medium- and close-range special abilities, Mao is ready to stand beside her partner and fight to the end. Instead of reducing damage taken by the party with Defense, Mao goes toward more evasive powers, making it hard for the enemy to land strikes in the first place. This gives battles almost an all-or-nothing aspect, where luck determines quite a bit of your party's performance. As with Volg, players need a heavy supply of healing items to ensure that nothing goes wrong. For fast fighting and racing through levels in general, Mao is the person for you.

BIOGRAPHY

Mao is one-quarter beast and was raised in Shildia. Caught with one foot in two different worlds, she has few close friends among either the Beasts or Humans of the city. Currently, she works as a representative of the King, investigating various problems within Shildia. Happy and flirtatious on the surface, Mao has a quiet and reflective side that rarely shows until she trusts someone.

EQUIPMENT

Mao's desired equipment varies quite a bit depending on whether you focus on her Strength or Intelligence abilities. Either way, she receives high-movement Ninja gear early on by focusing on Agility, something she wants to have in the first place. Certainly grab that for armor, then try to find a helm that either is high on Defense (for Attack builds) or raises Magic (for Intelligence builds).

Supplement either Mao's damage with a good elemental or poison-based accessory. Alternately, to be on the safe side, take a Dodge Brooch and further increase her chance to avoid attacks.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Use Mao to encircle enemy squads. Have your primary character rush forward with his or her Single Skills, then use Mao to flank and punish stragglers and other loose targets. Though this takes practice for single players, it's extremely rewarding to use Mao with a two-player setup.

Work hard to upgrade Mao's weaponry as soon as possible. The moment Xion hits Level 20, get Mao her third-tier weapon. Because so many of Mao's actions don't have huge Attack bonuses, it's crucial to have the best weapon available!

SKILLS

PHANTOM DASH

STATS: RUNNING ABILITY

Phantom Dash gives Mao an evasive run. This makes it easy to get her into position for flanking enemies and bringing firepower to bear from multiple sides.

FIRE FUGUE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	MAG	MAX DIAMETER	RANGE +	PENETRATION
1	1	2	+80	32	144	0
2	1	2	+91	32	144	0
3	2	3	+99	40	156	1
4	2	3	+107	40	156	1
5	2	3	+115	40	156	1
6	3	4	+121	48	168	2
7	3	4	+127	48	168	2
8	3	4	+133	48	168	2
9	3	4	+139	48	168	2
10	4	5	+144	56	180	3

Fire Fugue is an Intelligence-based Ninja art that throws Fire toward one's foes. The diameter grows with higher ranks, but not to the point where it covers a huge area. Strength-based Mao builds are more effective using Kunai Toss instead, but players who are interested in developing Mao's Intelligence attacks should stick with a fair number of ranks in this Skill.

KUNAI TOSS

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	ATTACK #	ACC +
1	1	3	+50	2	8
2	1	3	+58	2	8
3	2	4	+62	3	9
4	2	4	+67	3	9
5	2	4	+72	3	9
6	3	5	+75	4	10
7	3	5	+79	4	10
8	3	5	+83	4	10
9	3	5	+87	4	10
10	4	6	+89	5	11

Over a short distance, this physical attack deals moderate damage and supports a primary character who is already engaging enemy forces. Though less damaging than the multi-attack Single Skills of some of the alternate characters, Kunai Toss is extremely inexpensive, so Mao is able to continually use this during each encounter. Because of this lower cost, Mao has fewer reasons not to take many ranks of Kunai Toss as the necessary number of attacks is highly needed, and paying several more Skill Points won't stop her from using it frequently.

WILDFIRE SILHOUETTE

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +
1	250	3	210
2	265	4	226
3	280	5	242
4	295	6	256
5	310	7	270
6	325	8	284
7	340	9	296
8	355	10	308
9	370	11	320
10	385	12	332

Mao places a decoy between herself and the primary character. This decoy blasts enemies with Fire attacks if they come close enough. It's useful to have a low rank in this Skill and place the decoy before a particularly nasty fight with a large squad, but higher ranks of Wildfire Silhouette don't add quite enough power to be worthwhile for most builds.

SHINOBI RAID

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	MAG +	DUPLICATES	ACC
1	250	8	110	110	3	10
2	265	9	122	122	3	11
3	280	11	132	132	4	12
4	295	12	142	142	4	13
5	310	13	152	152	4	14
6	325	15	161	161	5	15
7	340	16	170	170	5	16
8	355	17	179	179	5	17
9	370	18	188	188	5	18
10	385	20	196	196	6	19

A single Mao can be a great thing, but this Link Skill makes it so that you get many Maos working together. Because of the substantial boost to Attack and Accuracy from this, the somewhat high Skill Point cost is decently offset.

SHADOW SLICE

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG +	KNOCKBACK
1	250	10	80	32
2	265	11	91	36
3	280	12	102	40
4	295	13	112	44
5	310	14	122	48
6	325	15	132	52
7	340	16	141	56
8	355	17	150	60
9	370	18	159	64
10	385	19	168	68

Mao uses this Intelligence-based attack to push enemies out of her way and deal damage to them as well. There is a fairly hefty setup time for the intended effect; this somewhat goes against the style of Mao. Indeed, use Shadow Slice for the Knockback when it is desired, but the damage is rarely worth the risk involved.

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GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL				
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	SUMMONINGS
1	250	35	210	4
2	265	38	231	5
3	280	41	252	6
4	295	44	272	7
5	310	47	292	8
6	325	50	312	9
7	340	53	331	10
8	355	56	350	11
9	370	59	369	12
10	385	62	388	13

Mao has a physical summon spell that costs a great deal and does quite high damage to her enemies. While slow to use, this ability complements her attacks better than a number of the summons for other characters, especially if you design her to have a high Attack in the first place.

ELUSION

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	EVASION + (%)
1	6
2	10
3	14
4	17
5	20
6	23
7	25
8	27
9	29
10	31

Mao doesn't get to slip into heavy armor very often, and her Hit Points don't top the charts either. Having a high Evasion is her best way to survive during intense engagements, so this Auto Skill cannot be ignored!

POISON BLADE

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	ADDED POISON DAMAGE
1	2
2	3
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
7	8
8	9
9	10
10	11

This Auto Skill doesn't scale wonderfully, but the amount of bonus damage Mao adds to her fast attacks is always better than nothing, and even a few ranks of Poison Blade give her the chance to improve her overall performance. Take the first point of Poison Blade almost instantly with her, then add more points much later on in her career.

VANISHING MIST

STATS: AUTO SKILL		
SKILL LEVEL	ACTIVATION (%)	DISTANCE
1	7	40
2	11	44
3	15	48
4	18	52
5	21	56
6	24	60
7	26	64
8	28	68
9	30	72
10	32	76

Combined with Elusion, Mao uses this Skill to blink out of the way from enemy attacks. The first five ranks of this Auto Skill are effective. After that, it's wise to add more ranks only when you have spare points.

CICADA'S SHELL

STATS: AUTO SKILL			
SKILL LEVEL	INITIAL (%)	STANDARD ACTIVATION (%)	HP RESTORED (%)
1	95	7	14
2	95	14	18
3	96	20	22
4	96	26	26
5	96	32	30
6	97	37	34
7	97	42	38
8	97	47	42
9	97	52	46
10	98	56	50

Cicada's Shell is like getting an extra life once Mao suffers mortal damage. The first time this occurs in a battle, her percentage chance is very high, but this number drops quite a bit for future woundings. Even aggressive Mao builds should have about three ranks of Cicada's Shell, since that raises her chances dramatically without a huge investment of points. More defensive builds can use Elusion, Vanishing Mist, and this Auto Skill together to create a defensive powerhouse without even dreaming of heavy armor.



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THE SAMURAI



To avoid spoiling anything, this section talks almost entirely about the abilities of this character. You receive this Samurai later in the game. Possessing some of Xion's aspects, in terms of combat use, the Samurai is less group-based and has a more direct focus on Strength and Attack.

BIOGRAPHY

This mysterious Samurai has trained for some time in the use of his weapons, although the purpose behind his dedication has yet to be discovered. He joins the group for his own reasons, although he has close ties with one significant member.

EQUIPMENT

The Samurai can wear the fast-moving Sarashi armor, but he soon rises to better things with a skilled party. He requires Agility and Constitution for many functions anyway, so heavier armors won't be a problem. Raise Strength far more than Intelligence, and wear one of the Attack-raising helms for fair protection and a bit more impact in battle.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The Samurai feels like a less team-oriented Xion. Able to deal damage and survive decently, he makes a very strong pairing with just about any other character. For a simple strategy, use Moon Dance to build Chain value while hitting squads on their flank and let Xion run up the center. Max Chain Power and Attack Up, and perk Moon Dance to a fair level. Against bosses, sandwich them between Xion and the Samurai, then use fully-charged Moon Dance attacks.

MOONLIGHT FANG

STATS: RUN ABILITY

The Samurai's Run Ability is very active. He cuts at enemies while running, dealing some damage and moving them out of the way with a Knockback effect.

MOON DANCE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	ATTACK #	ACC +
1	1	6	+50	4	8
2	1	6	+58	4	8
3	2	7	+62	5	9
4	2	7	+67	5	9
5	2	7	+72	5	9
6	3	8	+75	6	10
7	3	8	+79	6	10
8	3	8	+83	6	10
9	3	8	+87	6	10
10	4	9	+89	7	11

Moon Dance is a squad- and boss-killer that delivers on both damage and flexibility. Similar to Thousand Thrust, the Samurai uses this as a lead-in to the fighting that he plans against many targets. It is easy to use Moon Dance because of the long range of this character's Katana.

MOONLIT DAWN

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	LUNGE	ACC +
1	1	3	+90	32	8
2	1	3	+99	32	8
3	2	4	+105	48	9
4	2	4	+111	48	9
5	2	4	+117	48	9
6	3	5	+122	64	10
7	3	5	+127	64	10
8	3	5	+132	64	10
9	3	5	+137	64	10
10	4	6	+141	80	11

Moonlit Dawn is very inexpensive and throws the enemies about while dealing fair damage. Though narrower in focus than Moon Dance, Moonlit Dawn can be very useful for moving through enemy forces. Think of this more as a positioning tool than a destroyer of worlds.

SKILLS

TWIN MOON WAVE

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +
1	250	10	80
2	265	11	93
3	280	12	106
4	295	13	118
5	310	14	130
6	325	15	142
7	340	16	153
8	355	17	164
9	370	18	175
10	385	19	186

Twin Move Wave has a moderate price in Skill Points, but the Samurai and Xion are able to use it well together. Against both bosses and squads, this Link Attack lands quite effectively. Use Moon Dance for fights that are more immediate and Twin Moon Wave when planning and positioning are easier to manage.

MOONGLOW THRUST

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC +
1	250	3	120	10
2	265	4	135	11
3	280	5	150	12
4	295	6	164	13
5	310	7	178	14
6	325	8	192	15
7	340	9	205	16
8	355	10	218	17
9	370	11	231	18
10	385	12	244	19

Moonglow Thrust is harder to line up and prepare than Twin Moon Wave and its cost is higher than Moonlit Dawn. For most purposes, it's easier to use a Single Skill when this effect is desired than to run the risk of harm by waiting for a Link Skill.

HALF-MOON SLICE

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	ACC +
1	250	10	90	10
2	265	11	102	11
3	280	12	114	12
4	295	13	125	13
5	310	14	136	14
6	325	15	147	15
7	340	16	157	16
8	355	17	167	17
9	370	18	177	18
10	385	19	187	19

Half-Moon Slice is more Accurate than Twin Moon Wave for the same price, and the damage done is similar, but the area involved is not as large. This makes Half-Moon Slice more of a boss-focused Link Skill than a squad buster.

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GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL				
SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK +	SUMMONINGS
1	250	35	260	4
2	265	38	280	5
3	280	41	300	6
4	295	44	319	7
5	310	47	338	8
6	325	50	357	9
7	340	53	375	10
8	355	56	393	11
9	370	59	411	12
10	385	62	429	13

This Guardian Summon is centered on dealing damage without adding status effects or other such debuffs.

ATTACK UP

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	ATK +
1	5
2	8
3	11
4	13
5	15
6	17
7	19
8	21
9	23
10	25

As with many of the other characters' Auto Skills, this adds free damage to the Samurai's attacks without more than the initial investment of points. Take this up a number of ranks early on, then work to master the entire Skill later.

ELUSION

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	EVASION + (%)
1	6
2	10
3	14
4	17
5	20
6	23
7	25
8	27
9	29
10	31

This Auto Skill functions in the exact way that Mao's does. And, much like Mao, this character requires the boost in damage avoidance that it provides!

STUN

STATS: AUTO SKILL	
SKILL LEVEL	CHANCE OF PARALYSIS (%)
1	3
2	5
3	7
4	8
5	9
6	10
7	11
8	12
9	13
10	14

Take Stun to at least rank six, once the other Auto Skills are in good shape. Though Stun isn't as major as the rest of the Samurai's passive abilities, it still provides a potent boost to his fighting style. By Paralyzing enemies with his attacks, this character dooms his targets without giving them any chance to return the favor. Thus, this is much more of a defensive ability than an offensive one.

CHAIN POWER

STATS: AUTO SKILL		
SKILL LEVEL	ATK + (BY % OF CHAIN)	MAXIMUM CHAIN
1	75	16
2	81	24
3	87	32
4	92	39
5	97	46
6	102	53
7	106	59
8	110	65
9	114	71
10	118	77

Boost Chain Power and practice Moon Dance to rack up said Chain values. Take this to higher ranks than Attack Up if the Samurai has an active player, because intelligent use of this character allows Chain Power to deal vast damage in comparison to other Skills.

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THE MINSTREL



Later in the game, Xion is joined by a Minstrel. This character is a ranged/magical person who acts in a supporting role. His primary contribution is to disable enemies and debuff them while a primary attacker does the real damage. Also, the Minstrel improves resistance to Lightning and raises magical defense.

BIOGRAPHY

The Minstrel is a kind and light-hearted person who cares deeply for others. He has a special relationship with someone in the group, encouraging them to find their way in the world. His optimistic personality is tempered by a meditative and reflective side, and he is very conscious of the effects that his words and actions may have.

EQUIPMENT

The Minstrel benefits a great deal from gaining magical ability over solid defense. Because he is a ranged character, it is not as crucial for him to have raw defense. Instead, concentrate on getting him equipment that raises magical ability. Small increases in Hit Points from item attributes don't hurt either.

You may decide that the Minstrel works best when ultraspecialized against casters OR aerial units. In that regard, chose equipment that concentrates on Intelligence and Magic, or move toward slightly more damage-defensive Agility-based armor.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The Minstrel specializes in fights against aerial units and casters. His Auto Skills allow him to focus his power at a distance and defend himself against their attacks, using Anti-Aerial and Resist Magic. At closer ranges, the Minstrel's Thunder Ring gives him the protection that he needs while allowing his frontline partner to concentrate on the damage dealing. For smaller battles, allow the Minstrel to stay in the rear of the party using basic attacks, with Spark at hand to damage any foes that approach him.

This character also has Meditation, which allows him to restore his and his partner's Skill Points. This cuts down on some of the restorative items needed, and allows you to used Skill Point-intensive magical spells liberally.

SKILLS

PEACE SONG

STATS: LOCK SKILL

This song disables enemies while the Minstrel is locked; it prevents them from countering the actions of your primary character (usually Xion).

SPARK

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	MAG	MAX ENEMIES
1	1	5	85	3
2	1	5	97	3
3	2	6	106	4
4	2	6	115	4
5	2	6	124	4
6	3	7	132	5
7	3	7	140	5
8	3	7	148	5
9	3	7	156	5
10	4	8	163	6

This Intelligence-based skill brings down bolts of Lightning against any enemies near the Minstrel. However, it can only be used at close range, which is not his preferred position. It is worth putting a three or even four points into so that the Minstrel can protect himself if he gets swarmed, especially for an Intelligence-build Minstrel.

RAPID FIRE

STATS: SINGLE SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAX CHARGE	SP	ATK	# OF ATKS	ACC
1	1	3	50	2	8
2	1	4	58	2	8
3	2	5	62	3	9
4	2	6	67	3	9
5	2	7	72	3	9
6	3	8	75	4	10
7	3	9	79	4	10
8	3	10	83	4	10
9	3	11	87	4	10
10	4	12	89	5	11

The Minstrel fires off several attacks in rapid succession at range as a physical attack. This is very good against single targets, especially bosses. This can dramatically increase the damage output of the Minstrel. However, direct damage-dealing is not the Minstrel's specialty; rather, this Single Skill allows him to stay at range and contribute to basic combat.

SLOW MELODY

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	SLOW CHANCE (%)
1	250	2	37
2	265	2	43
3	280	2	48
4	295	2	53
5	310	2	57
6	325	2	61
7	340	2	65
8	355	2	68
9	370	2	71
10	385	2	74

This soothing melody slows the enemies within range. Because this effects enemies between the Minstrel and his partner, its main use is to help protect the Minstrel from being overwhelmed. This spell has a longer time to cast.

LIGHTNING MARCH

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	ATK	ACC (%)	PENETRATION (%)
1	250	4	210	10	50
2	265	5	228	11	50
3	280	6	246	12	50
4	295	7	263	13	50
5	310	8	280	14	50
6	325	9	297	15	50
7	340	10	313	16	50
8	355	11	329	17	50
9	370	12	345	18	50
10	385	13	361	19	50

This Strength-based skill gives a physical attack in a linear direction from the Minstrel to his partner. The more points within it, the longer the line. This requires that the enemies be between the Minstrel and his partner, so it is better to use it only if the enemies are advancing on the Minstrel's position.

THUNDER RING

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG	MAX DIAMETER
1	250	10	180	200
2	265	11	111	204
3	280	12	122	208
4	295	13	132	212
5	310	14	142	216
6	325	15	152	220
7	340	16	161	224
8	355	17	170	228
9	370	18	179	232
10	385	19	188	236

Two rings encircle the Minstrel and his partner, allowing them to simultaneous magically attack enemies within the ring's diameter. This is a lovely skill that allows the Minstrel to stay in a rear position while supporting his frontline partner and providing damage. This attack is best used against groups of enemies, especially where the frontliner is surrounded by the hordes.

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GUARDIAN SUMMON

STATS: LINK SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	RANGE	SP	MAG	CONFUSION (%)
1	250	35	220	40
2	265	38	250	40
3	280	41	276	55
4	295	44	302	55
5	310	47	328	55
6	325	50	350	70
7	340	53	372	70
8	355	56	394	70
9	370	59	416	70
10	385	62	436	85

The Guardian summon is a slow spell that calls a creature of the forest to magically attack anything within the range of the Minstrel and his partner. It also has a chance of giving confusion to your enemies. Although expensive in terms of Skill Points, it can be useful if the Minstrel gains too much attention from a swarm of foes.

RESIST THUNDER

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	LIGHTNING RESISTANCE
1	7
2	13
3	19
4	24
5	29
6	34
7	38
8	42
9	46
10	50

The Minstrel's resistance to Lightning-based attacks is increased. This is a skill for the later game, where he has free points to invest. Pair this up with a high Resist Magic to create an extremely magically-resistant (especially against Lightning) character.

RESIST MAGIC

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	MAGICAL DEFENSE
1	6
2	11
3	16
4	20
5	24
6	28
7	31
8	34
9	37
10	40

This Auto Skill allows the Minstrel to be resistant to all forms of magic and is a great skill to invest in. With this, the Minstrel becomes a great character to take against casters and allows him increased survival against ranged units. Any long-term Minstrel users are wise to invest in this skill.

MEDITATION

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	SP RECOVERY (PER 100 SECONDS)
1	50
2	90
3	130
4	160
5	190
6	220
7	240
8	260
9	280
10	300

Both party members benefit from an increased rate of Skill Point regeneration. This is a wonderful skill to invest in because it gives greater freedom and versatility to a party and lets them concentrate on their more-damaging attacks. The frontliner of the group can expend their Skill Points freely keeping the Minstrel safe, and the two can later pair up to create some mayhem later (like with a well-placed Thunder Ring).

ANTI-AERIAL

STATS: AUTO SKILL

SKILL LEVEL	DAMAGE BONUS VS. AERIALS (+%)
1	12
2	21
3	30
4	38
5	46
6	54
7	61
8	68
9	75
10	82

The Minstrel's damage against flying enemies is increased. This allows him to stay at range and damage some of the more maneuverable enemies. Because the Minstrel is a good character to bring in against flying enemies, long-term Minstrel users gain great benefits in specializing him against these foes.

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STRENGTH AGAINST THE DARKNESS

Strength Against the Darkness



Weapons are not purchased or found in *Shining Tears*. Instead, every character starts with a weapon and upgrades it by going to blacksmiths. There are many recipes that control how to advance the quality of your weapon, and this chapter allows players to skip the guesswork and get straight to the carnage.

Armor, helmets, and accessories are purchased and also dropped from enemies, but the system is similar for upgrading existing items from these categories.

This chapter also lists the prices and functions of usable items. Although far less complex than combat gear, these items are essential to the survival of most parties, especially in Advanced Mode, where every inch is a struggle for survival.

WEAPONS

Each character has a unique weapon set. There are four tiers for these weapons; the first tier has everyone's starting weapon. After that, tier two can be reached the moment you receive enough materials to make the conversion, which requires three different materials per conversion. Tiers three and four have level requirements before the blacksmiths are willing to complete the conversions for you.

Materials are acquired as random drops from squad leaders and bosses or can be found in treasure chests.

There are three forms of improvement with weaponry. The most impressive is to upgrade a weapon from one tier to the next. This is done at the northern blacksmith in the Blacksmiths' Quarters of Shildia. Upgrading from each tier causes a massive upswing in damage done! The second form of change is to shift weapon types within a tier, which means changing the weapon name, but improving the item in less dramatic ways. This is done to change attributes, elemental type, and so forth; the Dwarves of the caverns are able to do this. Finally, blacksmiths can be used to add bonuses to an item without changing its name or properties. This can be done at any blacksmith location.



Burning Extra Materials

Note that damage bonuses to weapons are affected by the materials you add, but it's quite easy to simply stack on the tools you have in greater supply. For instance, if you plan on using Xion and Volg frequently, add bonuses to their weapons by giving the blacksmiths Holy Water, Shinobi Stones, and Pegasus Manes. These items are of almost no use unless you play Ryuna, Mao, or the Minstrel because you can only carry nine of any specific material at one time! Make those excess materials work for you instead of having them simply fill up space.



Read the following tables to find out which items are required for the first two weapon conversions. To add bonuses instead of changing an item, simply use items that are not a recipe for change. This can get expensive, but every extra point of attack makes a difference in the long run, so it's worth it, especially with later weapon tiers.

- ③ Make weapon upgrades as soon as possible for primary characters. The money is trivial compared with the benefits
- ③ Use excess materials for damage bonuses. Use materials for characters who aren't being played.



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XION'S WEAPONRY

Xion uses a sword to dish out damage in melee. He has no problem keeping up with just about any of the aggressive characters in the lineup, and his weapon upgrades should take priority over others, since he is almost certain to be in your party for each encounter.



TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Bastard Sword	None	10	None	None
2	Chill Drifter	None	25	Ice	Ice Resistance +20
2	Thunder Bringer	None	35	Lightning	Magic +5%/Paralysis 5%
2	Steel Slicer	None	45	None	Accuracy +5%/Critical +10%
3	Wind Cutter	20	65	None	Accuracy +10%/Strong Vs. Aerials
3	Shadow Slasher	20	75	None	Evasion +10%/Critical +20%
3	Blaze Limiter	20	85	Fire	Magic +10%
4	Soul Breaker	40	105	None	Magic +25%/Cause Confusion 20%
4	Ice Disperser	40	125	Ice	Magic +15%/Freeze 5%
4	Stone Crusher	40	135	None	Knockback 20%
4	Lightning Fencer	50	115	Lightning	Defense +20/Attack Speed +30%

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Chill Drifter	Mithril + Unmelting Ice + Any
Thunder Bringer	Mithril + Tourmaline + Any
Steel Slicer	Mithril + Ceramic + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Wind Cutter	Thunder Bringer + Mithril + Ether + Any
Shadow Slasher	Chill Drifter + Mithril + Dark Matter + Any
Blaze Limiter	Steel Slicer + Mithril + Fire Crystal + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Soul Breaker	Blaze Limiter + Mithril + Dark Matter + Any
Ice Disperser	Shadow Slasher + Mithril + Unmelting Ice + Any
Stone Crusher	Blaze Limiter + Mithril + Ceramic + Any
Lightning Fencer	Wind Cutter + Mithril + Tourmaline + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Thunder Bringer	Steel Slicer + Mithril + Ceramic + Tourmaline
Chill Drifter	Thunder Bringer + Mithril + Tourmaline + Unmelting Ice
Steel Slicer	Chill Drifter + Mithril + Unmelting Ice + Ceramic

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Wind Cutter	Shadow Slasher + Mithril + Dark Matter + Ether
Blaze Limiter	Wind Cutter + Mithril + Ether + Fire Crystal
Shadow Slasher	Blaze Limiter + Mithril + Fire Crystal + Dark Matter

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Soul Breaker	Lightning Fencer + Mithril + Tourmaline + Dark Matter
Lightning Fencer	Ice Disperser + Mithril + Unmelting Ice + Tourmaline
Stone Crusher	Soul Breaker + Mithril + Dark Matter + Ceramic
Ice Disperser	Stone Crusher + Mithril + Ceramic + Unmelting Ice

ELWYN'S WEAPONRY

Elwyn uses her bow to hit enemies at range. She can't dig into groups of foes quite as fiercely as Xion, but her ability to engage fast targets and casters at range is wonderful. Aerial beasts are the worst off, since they take extra damage with Elwyn around AND lose the advantage of being able to fly off to avoid harm.



TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Long Bow	None	5	None	None
2	Hiemal Bow	None	20	Ice	Ice Resistance +20
2	Whirlwind Bow	None	30	None	Accuracy +5%/Slow 10%
2	Thunder Bow	None	40	Lightning	Paralysis 10%
3	Exorcist Bow	20	60	None	Magic +20/Penetration +10%
3	Glacial Bow	20	70	Ice	Freeze 10%
3	Hunter's Bow	20	80	None	Accuracy +10%/Anti-Aerial Attack
4	Charm Bow	40	100	None	Charm 20%
4	Lightning Bow	40	110	Lightning	Penetration 30%
4	Snowstorm Bow	40	120	Ice	Knockback 20%
4	Sure-Kill Bow	50	130	None	Accuracy +15%/Critical +30%

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Hiemal Bow	Yew + Unmelting Ice + Any
Whirlwind Bow	Yew + Ether + Any
Thunder Bow	Yew + Tourmaline + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Exorcist Bow	Thunder Bow + Yew + Orihalcum + Any
Glacial Bow	Hiemal Bow + Yew + Unmelting Ice + Any
Hunter's Bow	Whirlwind Bow + Yew + Mithril + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Charm Bow	Exorcist Bow + Yew + Ether + Any
Lightning Bow	Exorcist Bow + Yew + Tourmaline + Any
Snowstorm Bow	Glacial Bow + Yew + Unmelting Ice + Any
Sure-Kill Bow	Hunter's Bow + Yew + Dark Matter + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Hiemal Bow	Thunder Bow + Yew + Tourmaline + Unmelting Ice
Whirlwind Bow	Hiemal Bow + Yew + Unmelting Ice + Ether
Thunder Bow	Whirlwind Bow + Yew + Ether + Tourmaline

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Exorcist Bow	Hunter's Bow + Yew + Mithril + Orihalcum
Glacial Bow	Exorcist Bow + Yew + Orihalcum + Unmelting Ice
Hunter's Bow	Glacial Bow + Yew + Unmelting Ice + Mithril

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON

MATERIALS

Charm Bow	Sure-Kill Bow + Yew + Dark Matter + Ether
Lightning Bow	Charm Bow + Yew + Ether + Tourmaline
Snowstorm Bow	Lightning Bow + Yew + Tourmaline + Unmelting Ice
Sure-Kill Bow	Snowstorm Bow + Yew + Unmelting Ice + Dark Matter

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RYUNA'S WEAPONRY

Ryuna has her staff, should she need to get into direct combat, but it certainly doesn't see as much direct action as most characters' weapons. Instead, Ryuna often stays back and uses her skills to keep the party going. Does this mean that you shouldn't bother to upgrade her staff? Hardly; the bonuses gained from using the higher staves are advantageous in magic use and recuperation! Thus, upgrading Ryuna's gear is just as important as with a frontline fighter.



TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Staff	None	10	None	None
2	Cane of Joy	None	20	None	Magic +15%/SP +20
2	Cane of Sadness	None	30	None	Magic +15%/Curse 10%
2	Cane of Zeal	None	40	Fire	Magic +15%/Movement +20%
3	Cane of Chaos	20	50	None	Evasion +5%/Confusion 10%
3	Cane of Grief	20	60	None	Magic +20%/Slow 20%
3	Cane of Fear	20	70	None	Magic +20%/SP +40/Paralysis 15%
4	Cane of Peace	40	80	None	Magic +25%/HP and SP Recovery (Mid)
4	Cane of Love	40	90	None	Magic +25%/SP Costs -30%/Charm 20%
4	Cane of Rage	40	150	None	Magic 30%/Attack Speed +30%
4	Cane of Awe	50	120	None	Magic +30%/SP Recovery +30%

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Cane of Joy	Holy Water + Ether + Any
Cane of Sadness	Holy Water + Ceramic + Any
Cane of Zeal	Holy Water + Fire Crystal + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Cane of Chaos	Cane of Joy + Holy Water + Ceramic + Any
Cane of Grief	Cane of Sadness + Holy Water + Ether + Any
Cane of Fear	Cane of Zeal + Holy Water + Dark Matter + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Cane of Peace	Cane of Grief + Holy Water + Orichalcum + Any
Cane of Love	Cane of Awe + Holy Water + Orichalcum + Any
Cane of Rage	Cane of Fear + Holy Water + Dark Matter + Ceramic
Cane of Awe	Cane of Chaos + Holy Water + Orichalcum + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Cane of Joy	Cane of Sadness + Holy Water + Ceramic + Ether
Cane of Sadness	Cane of Zeal + Holy Water + Fire Crystal + Ceramic
Cane of Zeal	Cane of Joy + Holy Water + Ether + Fire Crystal

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Cane of Fear	Cane of Grief + Holy Water + Ether + Dark Matter
Cane of Chaos	Cane of Fear + Holy Water + Dark Matter + Ceramic
Cane of Grief	Cane of Chaos + Holy Water + Ceramic + Ether

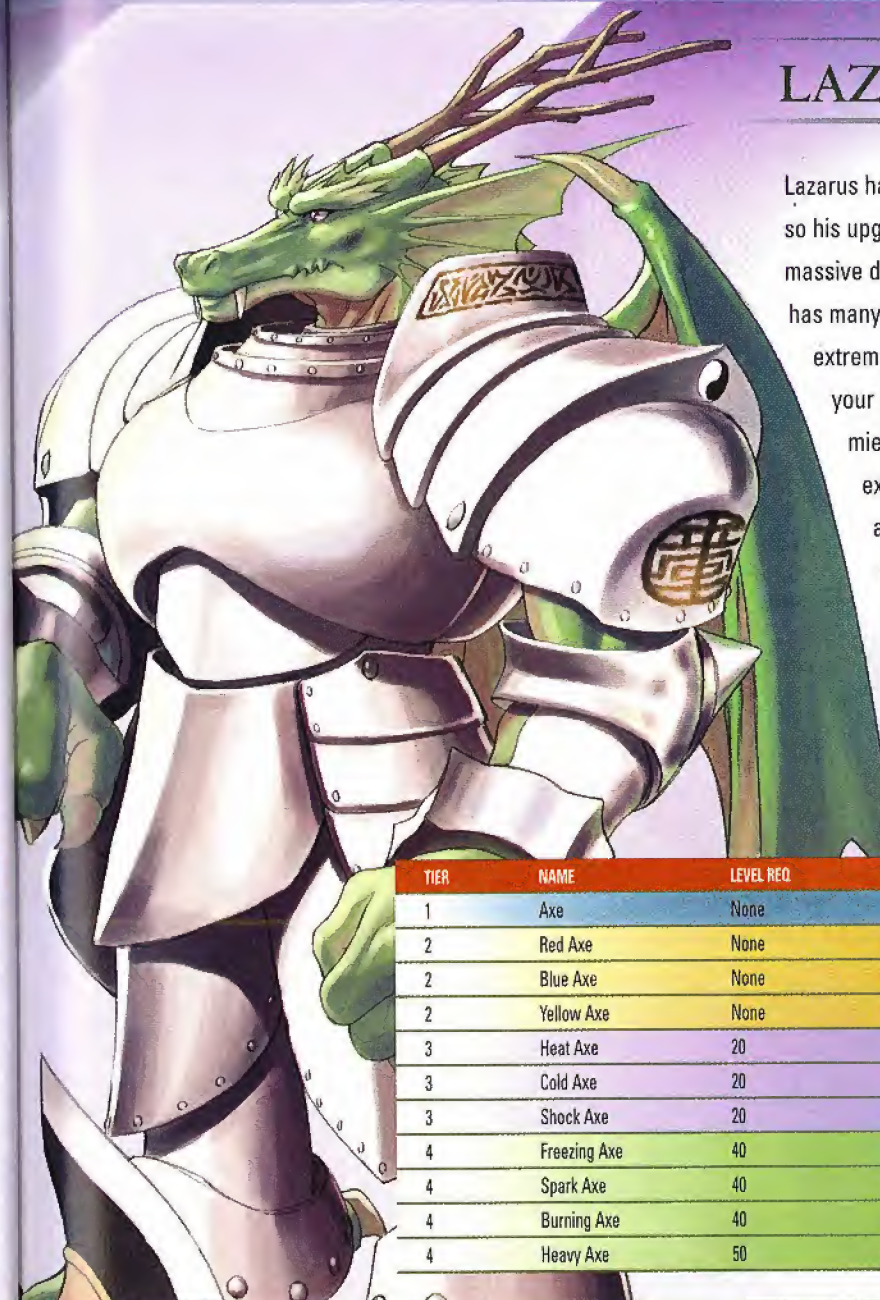
CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Cane of Awe	Cane of Love + Holy Water + Mithril + Orichalcum
Cane of Love	Cane of Peace + Holy Water + Mithril + Orichalcum
Cane of Peace	Cane of Rage + Holy Water + Mithril + Orichalcum
Cane of Rage	Cane of Awe + Holy Water + Mithril + Dark Matter

LAZARUS' WEAPONRY

Lazarus has incredible strength of arms and armor, so his upgrades focus on getting the big guy to deal massive damage at close range. Because Lazarus has many elemental weapons in his lineup, it is

extremely important to avoid getting the same element with your primary character since this would make some enemies almost immune to your pair. Instead, get Lazarus the exact opposite elemental weapon as your primary character so that all the bases are covered and an enemy's weakness can be completely exploited.



TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Axe	None	20	None	None
2	Red Axe	None	50	Flame	None
2	Blue Axe	None	50	Ice	None
2	Yellow Axe	None	50	Lightning	None
3	Heat Axe	20	80	Fire	Fire Resistance +30
3	Cold Axe	20	80	Ice	Ice Resistance +30
3	Shock Axe	20	80	Lightning	Lightning Resistance +30
4	Freezing Axe	40	120	Ice	Freeze 15%
4	Spark Axe	40	130	Lightning	Paralysis 15%
4	Burning Axe	40	140	Fire	None
4	Heavy Axe	50	150	None	Enemy Movement -30%/Confusion 20%

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Red Axe	Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Any
Blue Axe	Dragon Scale + Unmelting Ice + Any
Yellow Axe	Dragon Scale + Tourmaline + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Heat Axe	Red Axe + Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Any
Cold Axe	Blue Axe + Dragon Scale + Unmelting Ice + Any
Shock Axe	Yellow Axe + Dragon Scale + Tourmaline + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Freezing Axe	Cold Axe + Dragon Scale + Unmelting Ice + Any
Spark Axe	Shock Axe + Dragon Scale + Tourmaline + Any
Burning Axe	Heat Axe + Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Red Axe	Yellow Axe + Dragon Scale + Tourmaline + Fire Crystal
Blue Axe	Red Axe + Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Unmelting Ice
Yellow Axe	Blue Axe + Dragon Scale + Unmelting Ice + Tourmaline

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Heat Axe	Shock Axe + Dragon Scale + Tourmaline + Fire Crystal
Cold Axe	Heat Axe + Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Unmelting Ice
Shock Axe	Cold Axe + Dragon Scale + Unmelting Ice + Tourmaline

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Freezing Axe	Heavy Axe + Dragon Scale + Orichalcum + Unmelting Ice
Spark Axe	Freezing Axe + Dragon Scale + Unmelting Ice + Tourmaline
Burning Axe	Spark Axe + Dragon Scale + Tourmaline + Fire Crystal
Heavy Axe	Burning Axe + Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Orichalcum

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NEIGE'S WEAPONRY

As a ranged character who uses intense magic, Neige doesn't need much direct attack power, but her wand upgrades dramatically improve her magical power, resistances, and recovery, depending on which upgrade you choose. Many of these weapons are non-elemental, so there aren't many concerns about using specific wands for certain levels.

TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ.	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Wand	None	10	None	None
2	Blue Wand	None	30	None	Magic +15%/Fire Resistance +15/Ice Resistance +10
2	Carnelian Wand	None	30	None	Magic +15%/Lightning Resistance +15/Fire Resistance +15
2	Emerald Wand	None	30	None	Magic +15%/Ice Resistance +15/Lightning Resistance +10
3	Crystal Wand	20	50	None	Magic +20%/All Resistances +10
3	Pearl Wand	20	60	None	Magic +20%/Defense +20/Convert Damage to SP 10%
3	Ice Wand	20	80	Ice	Freeze 30%
4	Sapphire Wand	40	100	None	Magic 25%/Ice Resistance +40/SP Use -30%
4	Ruby Wand	40	100	None	Magic +25%/Fire Resistance +40/SP Recovery (High)
4	Topaz Wand	40	100	None	Magic +25%/Lightning Resistance +40
4	Diamond Wand	50	130	None	Magic +25%/All Resistances +15

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Amethyst Wand	Magestone + Fire Crystal + Any
Carnelian Wand	Magestone + Tourmaline + Any
Emerald Wand	Magestone + Unmelting Ice + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Crystal Wand	Carnelian Wand + Magestone + Ceramic
Pearl Wand	Amethyst Wand + Magestone + Ether
Ice Wand	Emerald Wand + Magestone + Unmelting Ice

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Sapphire Wand	Ice Wand + Magestone + Unmelting Ice + Any
Ruby Wand	Pearl Wand + Magestone + Fire Crystal + Any
Topaz Wand	Crystal Wand + Magestone + Tourmaline + Any
Diamond Wand	Crystal Wand + Magestone + Orihalcum + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Amethyst Wand	Carnelian Wand + Magestone + Tourmaline + Fire Crystal
Carnelian Wand	Emerald Wand + Magestone + Unmelting Ice + Tourmaline
Emerald Wand	Amethyst Wand + Magestone + Fire Crystal + Unmelting Ice

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Crystal Wand	Pearl Wand + Magestone + Ceramic + Ether
Pearl Wand	Ice Wand + Magestone + Ether + Unmelting Ice
Ice Wand	Crystal Wand + Magestone + Unmelting Ice + Ceramic

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Sapphire Wand	Ruby Wand + Magestone + Fire Crystal + Unmelting Ice
Ruby Wand	Diamond Wand + Magestone + Orihalcum + Fire Crystal
Topaz Wand	Sapphire Wand + Magestone + Unmelting Ice + Tourmaline
Diamond Wand	Topaz Wand + Magestone + Tourmaline + Orihalcum

VOLG'S WEAPONRY

Volg's extremely short-range weaponry deals decent damage while leaving him mobile and light on his feet.

The attack bonuses aren't quite as high as some of the other frontliners, but Volg gains many interesting special bonuses from his selection of weapons. Volg is most powerfully used by a second player, since it takes a person with knowledge and skill to get the most out of his abilities and bonuses.

TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ.	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Claw	None	10	None	None
2	Mosquito	None	25	None	Accuracy +5%/Poison Damage 6
2	Phantom	None	35	None	Evasion +5%/Movement +20%
2	Lightning	None	45	Lightning	None
3	Shooting Star	20	65	None	Accuracy +10%/Movement +20%
3	Thunderbolt	20	75	Lightning	Paralysis 10%
3	Tempest	20	85	Nothing	None
4	Demon	40	105	None	Curse 20%
4	Thunder Flash	40	125	Lightning	Movement +20%/Attack Speed +20%
4	Mirage	40	135	None	Evasion +10%/Movement +30%
4	Vampire	50	115	None	Convert Damage to HP 10%

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Mosquito	Beast Fang + Dark Matter + Any
Phantom	Beast Fang + Ether + Any
Lightning	Beast Fang + Tourmaline + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Shooting Star	Phantom + Beast Fang + Mithril
Thunderbolt	Lightning + Beast Fang + Tourmaline
Tempest	Mosquito + Beast Fang + Ether

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Demon	Tempest + Beast Fang + Dark Matter + Any
Thunder Flash	Thunderbolt + Beast Fang + Tourmaline + Any
Mirage	Shooting Star + Beast Fang + Ether + Any
Vampire	Tempest + Beast Fang + Mithril + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Mosquito	Phantom + Beast Fang + Ether + Dark Matter
Phantom	Lightning + Beast Fang + Tourmaline + Ether
Lightning	Mosquito + Beast Fang + Dark Matter + Tourmaline

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Shooting Star	Tempest + Beast Fang + Ether + Mithril
Thunderbolt	Shooting Star + Beast Fang + Mithril + Tourmaline
Tempest	Thunderbolt + Beast Fang + Tourmaline + Ether

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Demon	Mirage + Beast Fang + Mithril + Dark Matter
Thunder Flash	Vampire + Beast Fang + Mithril + Tourmaline
Mirage	Thunder Flash + Beast Fang + Mithril + Ether
Vampire	Demon + Beast Fang + Mithril + Orihalcum

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MAO'S WEAPONRY

Mao has a great deal of impact in terms of physical damage, but she also has magical abilities. Between the two, she is easily one of the more damaging characters to bring into a skirmish. She is defensively weak early, so her weapon upgrades and skills make a difference in keeping her alive later in the game.



TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ.	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Tanto	None	12	None	Magic +5%
2	Hatsushimo	None	30	Ice	Freeze 10%
2	Kagerou	None	40	Fire	Evasion +5%
2	Hayate	None	50	None	Movement +20%/Attack Speed +20%
3	Wakaba	20	70	None	Magic +15%/Poison Damage 6/SP Recovery (Mid)
3	Yukikaze	20	80	Ice	Magic +15%/Freeze 15%
3	Shiranui	20	90	Fire	Magic +15%/Evasion +10%
4	Kamikaze	40	110	None	Drift Speed +20%/Attack Speed +20%/Critical +20%
4	Asahi	40	120	Fire	Magic +20%/SP Recovery (High)
4	Fubuki	40	130	Ice	Magic +20%/Knockback 20%
4	Kongou	50	150	None	All Resistances +15

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Hatsushimo	Shinobi Stone + Unmelting Ice + Any
Kagerou	Shinobi Stone + Fire Crystal + Any
Hayate	Shinobi Stone + Ether + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Wakaba	Hayate + Shinobi Stone + Mithril + Any
Yukikaze	Hatsushimo + Shinobi Stone + Unmelting Ice + Any
Shiranui	Kagerou + Shinobi Stone + Fire Crystal + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Kamikaze	Wakaba + Shinobi Stone + Ether + Any
Asahi	Shiranui + Shinobi Stone + Fire Crystal + Any
Fubuki	Yukikaze + Shinobi Stone + Unmelting Ice + Any
Kongou	Wakaba + Shinobi Stone + Ceramic + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Hayate	Kagerou + Shinobi Stone + Fire Crystal + Ether
Hatsushimo	Hayate + Shinobi Stone + Ether + Unmelting Ice
Kagerou	Hatsushimo + Shinobi Stone + Unmelting Ice + Fire Crystal

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Shiranui	Yukikaze + Shinobi Stone + Unmelting Ice + Fire Crystal
Wakaba	Shiranui + Shinobi Stone + Fire Crystal + Mithril
Yukikaze	Wakaba + Shinobi Stone + Mithril + Unmelting Ice

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Kamikaze	Kongou + Shinobi Stone + Ceramic + Ether
Asahi	Kamikaze + Shinobi Stone + Ether + Fire Crystal
Fubuki	Asahi + Shinobi Stone + Fire Crystal + Unmelting Ice
Kongou	Fubuki + Shinobi Stone + Unmelting Ice + Ceramic

SAMURAI WEAPONRY

The Samurai uses long Eastern blades to cut his way into (and out of) problems. This weapon type automatically provides range and fair attack power, but many of the weapon upgrades are more on the modest side. The style of bonus effects includes interesting goodies, such as a damage shield. Many of these blades are not elemental, so that factor rarely comes into play.



TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ.	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Katana	None	10	None	None
2	Purifier	None	30	None	Strong Vs. Undead
2	Burning Edge	None	40	Fire	None
2	Shocking Edge	None	50	Lightning	None
3	Freezing Edge	20	70	Ice	Freeze 20%
3	Crimson Lotus	20	80	Fire	None
3	Soul Devourer	20	90	None	Restore SP by Damage 10%
4	Mirror Blade	40	110	None	Damage Reflection 20%
4	Inferno	40	120	Fire	Critical 20%
4	Thunderclap	40	130	Lightning	Knockback 20%
4	Life Eater	50	140	None	Restore HP by Damage 10%

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Purifier	Tamahagane + Orihalcum + Any
Burning Edge	Tamahagane + Fire Crystal + Any
Shocking Edge	Tamahagane + Tourmaline + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Freezing Edge	Purifier + Tamahagane + Unmelting Ice + Any
Crimson Lotus	Burning Edge + Tamahagane + Fire Crystal + Any
Soul Devourer	Shocking Edge + Tamahagane + Mithril + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Mirror Blade	Freezing Edge + Tamahagane + Orihalcum + Any
Inferno	Crimson Lotus + Tamahagane + Fire Crystal + Orihalcum
Thunderclap	Soul Devourer + Tamahagane + Mithril + Fire Crystal
Life Eater	Soul Devourer + Tamahagane + Dark Matter + Tourmaline

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Shocking Edge	Burning Edge + Tamahagane + Fire Crystal + Tourmaline
Purifier	Shocking Edge + Tamahagane + Tourmaline + Orihalcum
Burning Edge	Purifier + Tamahagane + Orihalcum + Fire Crystal

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Freezing Edge	Crimson Lotus + Tamahagane + Fire Crystal + Unmelting Ice
Crimson Lotus	Soul Devourer + Tamahagane + Mithril + Fire Crystal
Soul Devourer	Freezing Edge + Tamahagane + Unmelting Ice + Mithril

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Mirror Blade	Life Eater + Tamahagane + Mithril + Orihalcum
Inferno	Thunderclap + Tamahagane + Tourmaline + Fire Crystal
Thunderclap	Mirror Blade + Tamahagane + Mithril + Tourmaline
Life Eater	Inferno + Tamahagane + Fire Crystal + Dark Matter

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MINSTREL WEAPONRY

The Minstrel can support your main character in combat through ranged attacks and magic; the upgrades that his weapon receives reflect this by contributing all manner of bonuses. The raw attack value of the Minstrel's upgrades is not enough to make him a powerful force in close combat, but this is augmented by the ranged and magical abilities of the character. When complemented by the upgrade bonuses that fill this table, the Minstrel becomes even more capable of disrupting enemy formations and attacks.

TIER	NAME	LEVEL REQ	ATK	ELEMENT	BONUSES
1	Harp	None	15	None	None
2	Medusa's Harp	None	25	None	Magic +10%/Slow 20%
2	Salamander's Harp	None	35	Fire	Fire Resistance +20
2	Harpy's Harp	None	45	None	Movement +20%/Strong Vs. Aerials
3	Pan's Harp	20	65	None	Magic +15%/Confusion 20%
3	Phoenix's Harp	20	75	Fire	HP Recovery (High)
3	Titan's Harp	20	85	None	HP +100
4	Gryphon's Harp	40	125	None	Strong Vs. Aerials
4	Zeus' Harp	40	135	Lightning	Accuracy +10%
4	Siren's Harp	50	105	None	Magic +20%/Charm 25%
4	Hydra's Harp	50	115	None	Poison 9/HP Recovery (High)

UPGRADING TO TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Medusa's Harp	Pegasus Mane + Ceramic + Any
Salamander's Harp	Pegasus Mane + Fire Crystal + Any
Harpy's Harp	Pegasus Mane + Ether + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Pan's Harp	Harpy's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Dark Matter + Any
Phoenix's Harp	Salamander's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Fire Crystal + Any
Titan's Harp	Medusa's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Mithril + Any

UPGRADING TO TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Gryphon's Harp	Phoenix's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Ether + Any
Zeus' Harp	Titan's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Tourmaline + Any
Siren's Harp	Pan's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Orihalcum + Any
Hydra's Harp	Phoenix's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Dark Matter + Any

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 2

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Medusa's Harp	Harpy's Harp + Pegasus Harp + Ether + Ceramic
Salamander's Harp	Medusa's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Ceramic + Fire Crystal
Harpy's Harp	Salamander's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Fire Crystal + Ether

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 3

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Pan's Harp	Titan's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Mithril + Dark Matter
Phoenix's Harp	Pan's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Dark Matter + Fire Crystal
Titan's Harp	Phoenix's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Fire Crystal + Mithril

CHANGING WITHIN TIER 4

DESIRED WEAPON	MATERIALS
Gryphon's Harp	Hydra's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Dark Matter + Ether
Zeus' Harp	Gryphon's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Ether + Tourmaline
Siren's Harp	Zeus' Harp + Pegasus Mane + Tourmaline + Orihalcum
Hydra's Harp	Siren's Harp + Pegasus Mane + Orihalcum + Dark Matter

HELMS

Helms provide additional defense to characters while often altering a character's magical abilities as well. Sometimes, helms are made to improve magic but lack some of the greater defense of alternatives. Others harm a character's magical potential but have additional physical defense. To use purely physical helms, look for the few that have no Intelligence requirement and put them on characters who rely heavily on their Strength. For casters, slip into Intelligence-based helms instead and seek the highest upgrade to their magical potential.

- Characters that are either casters or melee types benefit the most from one-sided helms (e.g., Dragon Helm, Mage Cap, Sallet)
- Helms with mixed stats are best for hybrid melee/magic builds (e.g., Light-Based Xion)

STANDARD HELMS

NAME	DEFENSE	MAGIC(%)	STR REQ	INT REQ	SPECIAL
Cap	5	-	30	0	None
Bandanna	6	-	27	27	None
Katyusha	7	+10	0	36	Equip: Only Female Characters
Mage Cap	8	+25	0	70	Equip: Neige Only
Elf Hat	10	+15	35	37	None
Silk Hat	14	-	36	45	None
Open Helm	15	-10	42	0	None
Circlet	17	+20	44	57	None
Turban	19	-	49	35	None
Halo	19	-	0	53	HP Recovery (High)
Fire Halo	19	+20	0	56	HP Recovery (Mid)/Fire Resistance +20
Bow's Bandanna	23	-	46	57	Penetration +20%/Critical +30
Feather Cap	24	+21	38	59	None
Samurai Helmet	27	-15	52	0	ATK +4
Coronet	33	+30	48	69	None
Magical Hat	34	+25	47	64	None
Wolf Helm	35	-12	0	70	Equip: Volg Only
Beret	38	-	57	48	None
Horned Helm	42	+30	64	27	Attack +10
Devil Crown	45	+27	59	59	None
Shako	48	-	66	44	None
Corpse Crown	48	-16	42	42	None
Sallet	55	-10	70	0	None
Rune Helm	56	-	54	43	Equip: Neige/Samurai Only
Black Helm	68	-10	60	47	Equip: Volg/Mao Only
Full Helm	69	-10	75	47	None
Dragon Helm	69	-12	77	0	Equip: Lazarus Only
Mithril Helm	104	+20	67	47	None

SPECIAL HELM UPGRADES

HELM NAME	FORMULAE
Cat's Ears	Katyusha + Fire Crystal + Beast Fang + Shinobi Stone
Coronet	Circlet + Orihalcum + Holy Water + Dark Matter
Magical Hat	Silk Hat + Magestone + Tourmaline + Any
Mithril Helm	Full Helm + Dark Matter + Mithril + Ceramic
Turban	Bandana + Unmelting Ice + Yew + Any

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ARMOR

Body armor is another heavy source of defense for each character. Some pieces of armor slow down characters, while a few are so light that characters move at a faster rate while wearing them. As with helms, there are attribute requirements for these items; in this case, Agility and Constitution are used to determine what a character can wear.

- Agility and Constitution determine armor use
- Some armor pieces can be dramatically upgraded at a Blacksmith

STANDARD ARMOR PIECES

NAME	DEFENSE	MOVEMENT(%)	AGILITY REQ	CONSTITUTION REQ	SPECIAL
Robe	5	100	22	0	None
Shoulder Guard	6	110	0	30	None
Cloak	8	100	31	29	None
Elf Jacket	13	115	42	27	Equip: Elwyn Only
Ninja Gear	15	123	54	0	Equip: Mao Only
Vest	16	110	43	31	None
Chihaya	20	100	34	36	Equip: Ryuna Only
Coat	21	100	39	44	None
Wolf Greaves	22	125	44	37	Equip: Volg Only
Leather Armor	26	100	30	47	None
Kung Fu Jacket	29	120	49	35	None
Bone Mail	30	100	42	42	Protection Vs. Undead
Rune Plate	31	87	29	40	None
Royal Gown	32	100	40	38	Equip: Only Royalty
Scale Armor	34	95	33	53	None
Sarashi	35	120	51	52	Equip: Samurai Only
Ring Mail	41	95	36	58	None
Loincloth of Virility	47	110	52	52	Charm 50%
Gown	50	110	53	53	None
Chain Mail	56	90	37	67	None
High-Class Jacket	58	120	60	46	None
Silk Robe	61	120	80	0	None
Black Mail	65	92	43	49	Equip: Volg/Mao Only
Dragon Armor	67	85	0	61	Equip: Lazarus Only
Centaur Armor	84	80	47	85	Protection Vs. Undead/ Increased SP Use +50%
Magic Armor	87	100	31	65	None
Stage Dress	89	125	90	0	None
Metal Armor	101	70	0	100	None
Mithril Armor	126	100	41	80	None
Stone Armor	140	60	0	120	None
Inviolable Lingerie	0	120	65	44	None Evasion +45%
Armor of Light	0	100	64	64	Increased Resistances
Armor of Shadow	0	100	64	64	Damage Shield

SPECIAL ARMOR UPGRADES

ARMOR NAME	FORMULAE
Armor of Light	Magic Armor + Ether + Orihalcum + Mithril
Armor of Shadow	Magic Armor + Ether + Dark Matter + Mithril
Blizzard Raiment	Chihaya + Pegasus Mane + Ether + Unmelting Ice
Coat	Cloak + Fire Crystal + Beast Fang
Inviolable Lingerie	Loincloth of Virility Orihalcum + Holy Water + Dark Matter
Judo Gi	Coat + Holy Water + Mithril + Tamahagane
Loincloth of Virility	Sarashi + Beast Fang + Dragon Scale + Tamahagane
Magic Armor	Plate Armor + Magestone + Orihalcum
Mithril Armor	Plate Armor + Dark Matter + Mithril + Ceramic
Mithril Robe	Robe + Mithril + Ceramic
Silk Robe	Robe + Pegasus Mane + Dragon Scale + Yew
Stage Dress	Silk Robe + Dragon Scale + Fire Crystal + Yew
Tempest Raiment	Chihaya + Pegasus Mane + Ether + Tourmaline

ACCESSORIES

Accessories allow characters to fill out their various stats or give themselves bonuses to round out areas here they might otherwise be weak. This can mean enhanced HP/SP recovery, higher skills, or better attributes for a more direct boost. This slot is also used to equip enemy cards, dramatically reducing the damage your character takes from that variety of enemy.

Customizing the accessories used for each mission can make all the difference between a frustrating time of things and a smooth run, because accessories can be tailored to the strengths and weakness of each party member and the enemies that they encounter during the mission.

NAME	LEVEL REQ	BONUSES
Attack Brooch	1	Attack Power +15
Book of Souls	1	Improves SP
Bronze Medal	1	HP +25
Cosmic Disk	1	Magic +12
Defense Brooch	1	Defense +15
Magic Brooch	1	Magic Power +15
Moon Pendant	1	SP +35
Ruby Charm	1	Fire Resistance +35
Sapphire Charm	1	Ice Resistance +35
Survival Book	1	Improves HP (Based on Card Collection Size)
Topaz Charm	1	Lightning Resistance +35
Air Bracelet	8	Increases Damage Vs. Aerials +50%
Amethyst Charm	8	Fire Resistance +22/Ice Resistance +22
Carnelian Charm	8	Thunder Resistance +22/Fire Resistance +22
Dodge Brooch	8	Evasion +15%
Emerald Charm	8	Ice Resistance +22/Lightning Resistance +22
Holy Bracelet	8	Protection Vs. Undead
Magatama	8	Halves Damage From Poison
Target Brooch	8	Accuracy +15%
Blessing Gem	10	Blessing Skill +3
Blizzard Gem	10	Blizzard Skill +3
Cure Gem	10	Cure Skill +3
Double Attack Gem	10	Double Attack Skill +3
Dragon Spiral Gem	10	Dragon Spiral Skill +3
Drill Crusher Gem	10	Drill Crusher Skill +3
Elemental Shot Gem	10	Elemental Shot Skill +3
Fire Fugue Gem	10	Fire Fugue Skill +3
Gatling Punch Gem	10	Gatling Punch Skill +3
Gravity Slash Gem	10	Gravity Slash Skill +3
Ice Breath Gem	10	Ice Breath Skill +3
Ice Wall Gem	10	Ice Wall Skill +3
Ironskin Gem	10	Ironskin Skill +3
Kunai Toss Gem	10	Kunai Toss Skill +3
Medal of Blessing	10	Increases Money Drops

NAME	LEVEL REQ	BONUSES
Meditation Gem	10	Meditation Skill +3
Multishot Gem	10	Multishot Skill +3
Return Arrow Gem	10	Return Arrow Skill +3
Shadow Slice Gem	10	Shadow Slice Skill +3
Spark Gem	10	Spark Skill +3
Spiritual Ward Gem	10	Spiritual Ward Skill +3
Thousand Thrust Gem	10	Thousand Thrust Skill +3
Thunder Blade Gem	10	Thunder Blade Skill +3
Thunder Ring Gem	10	Thunder Ring Skill +3
Twin Tackle Gem	10	Twin Tackle Skill +3
Wildfire Silhouette Gem	10	Wildfire Silhouette Skill +3
Crystal Charm	14	All Attributes +17
Poison Bracelet	14	Adds Poison Damage +8
Amber Bracelet	20	Attack Power +12/Lightning Attribute
Blam Bracelet	20	Adds Knockback to Weapon Attacks
Cobalt Bracelet	20	Attack Power +12/Ice Attribute
Critical Bracelet	20	Critical +20%
Crystal Bracelet	20	Attack Power +12/Non-Elemental
Penetrate Bracelet	14	Adds to Penetration 20%
Quick Brooch	20	Attack Speed +30%
Rest Jewel	20	SP Recovery (High)
Scarlet Bracelet	20	Attack Power +12/Fire Attribute
Silver Medal	20	HP +35
Spike	20	Can Curse Enemies
Stun Bracelet	20	Paralysis +20%
Diamond Charm	25	All Resistances +20
Draconic Amulet	25	DEF +10, All Resists +10, EVA +5, Ryuna/Lazarus Only
Star Pendant	25	SP +55
Gold Medal	35	HP +45
Advanced Scope	40	Accuracy +25%
Demon Book	40	Magic Power +30
Healing Jewel	40	HP Recovery (High)
Seeing Stooping	40	Damage Shield 30%
Nebula Pendant	45	SP +70
Platinum Medal	50	HP +55
Super Advanced Scope	60	

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CONSUMABLE

Various additional restorative items and attack devices are available for purchase in *Shining Tears*, and there are a few items that are only found randomly from chests and slain enemies. Some players prefer to stockpile items for a rainy day, but this is a game that is made far more difficult when these items aren't used. It is far better to rely on these extra goodies during heated battles than to be stingy and fall prematurely, and losing all your hard-earned money in the process.

Only 9 of each type of item can be carried at a time. However, because there is the option to retreat at any time during a mission, depleting supplies of an item is not a serious concern. That being said, retreating from a battle causes a loss of bonus experience gained at the completion of a mission. To maximize your rewards, especially in the late game, enter dangerous missions fully stocked and budget your item use in mission.

CONSUMABLES		
ITEM	COST(G)	FUNCTION
Herb	90	Restores 30 HP to Party
Recovery Fruit	240	Restores 60 HP to Party
Healing Drop	600	Restores 120 HP to Party
Healing Water	1,500	Restores 250 HP to Party
Moon Fragment	45	Restores 30 SP to Party
Star Crystal	150	Restores 60 SP to Party
Angel's Tears	420	Restores 120 SP to Party
Goddess' Tears	1,250	Restores 250 SP to Party
Pixie Dust	40	Removes All Status Effects From One Character
Antidote	60	Cures Poison in Party
Panacea	160	Cures All Status Effects in Party
Soul Return	1,600	Revives a Fall Partner
Magic Mirror	40	Draws Enemies Closer
Gravity Stone	20	Slows Enemies Down
Seductive Perfume	30	Charms an Enemy
Bomb	50	Deals Damage Over a Small Area

MATERIALS

Forging higher-quality weapons and armor requires various materials to be gathered. These are found, at random, by slaying droves of enemies and opening the chests that fill many of the game's missions. Each time a blacksmith attempts to improve a helm, armor piece, or weapon, three materials are used. Collect these items avidly, and be sure not to sell them or use them wantonly. Use the tables in this chapter to determine which upgrades you need the most and complete those before experimenting with others.

SMITHING MATERIALS		
MATERIAL	RARITY	USE
Mithril	Common	All Characters
Orihalcum	Rare	High-Level Upgrades
Dark Matter	Rare	High-Level Upgrades
Ether	Common	All Characters
Ceramic	Common	All Characters
Fire Crystal	Common	All Characters/Fire Element
Unmelting Ice	Common	All Characters/Ice Element
Tourmaline	Common	All Characters/Lightning Element
Yew	Uncommon	Elwyn Bow Upgrades
Holy Water	Uncommon	Ryuna Cane Upgrades
Dragon Scale	Uncommon	Lazarus Axe Upgrades
Magestone	Uncommon	Neige Wand Upgrades
Beast Fang	Uncommon	Volg Claw Upgrades
Shinobi Stone	Uncommon	Mao Knife Upgrades
Tamahagane	Uncommon	Samurai Upgrades
Pegasus Mane	Uncommon	Minstrel Upgrades

STRATEGY

There are both direct and subtle means to advance your power in *Shining Tears*. Tactically, players improve their performance in the game by learning where to hit enemy squads, when to release Charge attacks, and so forth. Strategically, however, the characters won't excel unless their players have a deep understanding of the underlying mechanics of the game. Proper attribute allocation, skill improvements, and item use are all essential to this end. This chapter looks through both tactical and strategic means to improve your gameplay!

TACTICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Tactical decisions are made on the field, at the time of conflict. The characters you choose are already set by the time a fight begins, so these choices focus around which skills to use, when to use them, and how to be most effective with the items/people you already have at your disposal.

WHEN AND WHERE TO HIT 'EM

The single most important part of playing this game effectively is knowing how to position characters for their best attacks. Use an incredible skill at the wrong time or angle and watch defeat spill over the screen. Indeed, timing and position are everything.



Practice your favorite characters' best attacks and see what their range is; do this when few monsters are around so that full attention can be paid to the skill itself. Get a feel for how long the attack lasts and what portions of the character are exposed while the move is in progress. Once these aspects of a skill are understood, look at the way each enemy squad is formed and try to find the softest part of

the formation to attack! Using a powerful skill at the weakest point of a squad is done to hit as many targets as possible without receiving retributive fire.

For Example

A key example of the previous paragraph comes with Xion's Thousand Thrust skill, one of the most commonly used skills in the game, so it serves well here. Xion attacks



with a series of forward thrusts that deal heavy damage to anything that is remotely in front of him. However, his rear and flanks are exposed the entire time. For victory, a Xion player must drive into the heart of an enemy squad without letting the peripheral enemies double-flank him. Instead of aiming for the dead center of a large squad, try to hit a corner and slice cleanly through just over one-third of the targets. This is slightly less aggressive, but it pays for itself by avoiding any flank attacks, since those foes on one side are dead, and the others can be avoided with a quick retreat as you recharge.

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That is the balance: hitting as many foes as possible while defending your character from the swarms of attackers that follow. Each skill has its advantages and downsides. Watch for the weak spots and compensate for them. If you have a second player controlling the other character, have that person defend the weak areas of your character with their skills.

Recognizing Elements

Many enemies in the game have elemental resistances that make it much harder to farm them with a specific type of elemental damage. Color coding of these resistances is consistent. Red enemies are invariably resistant to Fire, blue enemies are strong versus Ice damage, and yellow foes resist Lightning. There are melee monsters that fall through the cracks, having poor resistance to all three common elements, and mystic foes who are good against many forms, this system is effective for quickly deciding when not to use elemental damage.

Chains!

Hitting enemies in fast succession, with Combos, Charge Attacks, and Link Attacks, improves your character's Chain Rating. A number of characters have abilities that improve their Attack value depending on the value of their Chains, so this can lead to dramatic damage improvements!

To keep a high Chain going, stay in combat almost constantly. Every moment that you aren't fighting decreases your Chain value. The next step is to use moves that automatically have many attacks instead of a single, slow attack. Damage isn't the issue here; it's more a measure of frenzied activity.

Characters like Xion have a huge dependence on having high Chain Ratings in major battles. Consider that Xion has two entire skills focused on improving his Attack through maintaining his Chain. Therefore, the better you become at successfully increasing his Chain totals, the more effective and damaging Xion becomes.

USING YOUR SUPPORT CHARACTER

Even without a second live player at your side, it is great to have a partner for your character. The AI-controlled characters won't function as actively, but they use their skills and do their best to counter enemy actions. For greater power, use the right analog stick to position your partner; this allows for simple formation tactics. Practice having your primary character get into position and begin attacking. While these attacks continue, switch to the right stick and move your supporting character in the best position for their own actions.

Early on, there may be a few problems getting a supporting character to do what you want them to. This is because they treat their skills somewhat equally in value until there is clear advancement in one of them. Thus, you can get Ryuna to do more Cure work by raising her skill in Cure during the first few levels. She responds by Curing more often in the future. The same is true for all characters.



Get Allies Into Position

The tactical side of this is to put your support character in the right place to maximize their role. Don't let Ryuna rush into direct combat or get swarmed by foes; she needs the room to Cure and Bless without hassle. On the flipside, keep someone like Lazarus from getting stuck behind your primary character. Position heavy melee types in the front of a conflict to give the AI its best chance to deal damage.

Keeping Friends Alive

When flying solo, watch both your health and that of your support character. There are several good reasons to keep both characters alive for the full duration of a battle. For one, your partner loses experience every time they die. It is rather counterproductive toward leveling your partner if they end up dead most of the time!

Second, there is a relationship between Xion and each of the supporting characters in the game. This improves as you go into battle with each person, but they lose affection for you if an enemy brings them down. To keep everyone happy with Xion, don't let anyone hurt your buddies.

When fighting, use your Mini-Map as much as possible to see what areas are ahead of you. Narrow corridors make it easy for waves of Charge attacks to wade through your enemies but can limit passage; use the bottlenecks to your advantage and move weaker partners to a safe position behind the passage. It is much better to have Ryuna, for example, safely behind Xion than blocking the narrow space ahead, limiting Xion's movement and exposing them both to enemy fire. Holding Ryuna back keeps her much safer and allows her to concentrate on vital repair work.

Open areas offer the possibility of flanking attacks, with both characters having the ability to use their strongest attacks and pincering foes between them. As an added bonus, though, there is usually a clear path that your partner can retreat to. If you are worried about their health, place your partner behind their stronger friend and let the other character hold off the invading enemies.

If one character does more damage to the enemies, then the enemies concentrate their attention on that character. This makes it much easier to manipulate your foes into attacking a stronger group member. For example, if Neige is being hit by too many creatures, use Xion's Charge abilities to slam right into the mass of monsters attacking Neige. The foes are very likely to center their aggression on Xion then, leaving Neige to pull back and regroup.

There are times, however, when your partner is down for the count. At this point, Soul Returns have a great place in your inventory. Use these items to return fallen allies to a battle and to keep them from becoming as upset about their near-death experience.



Back From the Dead

Some missions have several parts. If your partner dies during an early portion of the mission, successfully reaching the green flag and moving on to the next part of the mission automatically restores your partner, and your primary character, to full Hit Points and Skill Points. The same thing occurs in the Tower of Heaven when a floor is completed.


Note that the death of your primary character always causes the mission to end and the group reforms again at the Heroes' Hearth. This occurs even in the Mirror World, where Xion is not always your primary character. In this case, the character on the left side—the first one you chose—counts as your primary character.



READING THE MINI-MAP

Shining Tears is quite generous with its Mini-Map; the game provides information for almost all enemies on the level at full range. There are minor cases where stealthed enemies are not shown, but most foes in this game are revealed immediately upon entering the level.

Examine the Mini-Map as soon as you are free to do so when moving around a level. The pathways through a region are clearly shown, and even the number of kills required to open the exit is listed there, beneath the map, when applicable.

Use  to change the size of the Mini-Map or remove it entirely, should that ever become an issue. The default size of the map is functional, but everyone has their own sense of taste.

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RADAR LEGEND

- ① Yellow: Generic Monster
- ② Green: Your Partner
- ③ White: Your Character
- ④ Glowing Red: Squad Leader
- ⑤ Large Glowing Red: Map Boss
- ⑥ Pink: Monster Generator
- ⑦ Blue: Exit to Next Level

SENSIBLE ITEM USE

There is a right time and place for all of the game's items. Consumable items are available in the Tool Shops of Shildia. Some of these cost too much to be used lightly early in the game, but the economy of the late game is much more lenient. By the time a person enters Advanced Mode (after beating the game once), it becomes almost required that items be used during every battle.

Healing Items

There are several healing items to aid your party. All of these are capable of restoring Hit Points to your primary and



secondary characters, and the effects occur instantly. It is safe to hold off on using some of these goodies until almost the last minute.

Items to Restore Skill Points

Depending on the support character you choose, Skill Points may be a critical issue for your party. Support characters that do not contribute to SP restoration while using many skills are given to tapping out. This reduces their combat effectiveness, as one or both of your characters begin to struggle for natural Skill Point restoration to keep up with skill use. To counter this, and possibly save considerable money on wasted healing items and accidental deaths, use items to restore party Skill Points when characters start to get low.

Combating the Enemies

Bombs, Magic Mirrors, and Seductive Perfume are, respectively, used to damage and disrupt enemy forces. Enough of these drop while fighting normal squads that it is only necessary to purchase these if you rely heavily on them.

Selection at the Tool Shops

For a moment, people may worry that some items aren't available in the Tool Stores, but this is merely a matter of local selection. Visit both of the Tool Stores in Shildia for a full selection of consumable items. One store is in the Promenade and another in the area near the Heroes' Hearth.



Outside of battle, there are many questions to answer. What enemies are awaiting the group? What can be done to limit their capabilities while enhancing our skills against them? Using the right equipment, crafting characters for specific duties, and holding onto cards to reduce enemy damage make a massive difference in each engagement.

STRATEGY BEHIND THE SCENES

WHAT TO EQUIP

Without high-end weapons, helms, and armor, it is quite difficult to face the enemies in the later stages of *Shining Tears*. Even worse, the most basic forces of Advanced Mode obliterate parties that aren't equipped with the best items at their disposal.

The first step is to decide what you want a character to have. If Xion is used as a Dark character (by teaming with Ryuna, for example), it is effective to have him shoot for heavy armor and high attack power. To this end, maximize Xion's Strength and Constitution to wear heavier helms and armor, then upgrade his weaponry with an eye for raw damage within each weapon tier.

On the other hand, a character like Neige needs to have high Magic almost all of the time and can afford to sacrifice a bit of Defense to get it. For her, maximize Intelligence and Agility first, then work on Strength and Constitution only enough to reach desired item requirements.



Like Calls to Like

Although helms and armor randomly drop from squad leaders and bosses and can be found in treasure chests, there is a slight level of correspondence between the type of enemy and the type of equipment that they drop. Monsters that are of a specific class (like ninjas or casters) are more likely to drop equipment for their class. Therefore, if there is a specific character in your group that you are trying to get better equipment for, complete missions against enemies of that character's type. For example, if you want ninja gear for Mao, attack Ninja-type enemies. The Mirror Worlds are wonderful for this because you can repeat battles against specific enemies to your heart's content until you get the items you want.

Attribute Requirements on Equipment

It is quite common to find items that are wonderful for your characters that cannot be used until various attribute requirements are met. If you try to raise only a single attribute on any character, it can be disastrous in the late game when it takes a long time to gather attribute points. Indeed, going heavily for Strength and ignoring Constitution may get you into some nice helms early on, but at the cost of better armor! Min/Maxing is very hard to pull off in *Shining Tears* because of this.

For a safer route which is especially wise for new players, look at the item tables and figure out which pieces should be great for your characters. Write down the attributes that are needed for those items and compare them to what your people already possess. This way, you can create a leveling guide for "fitting" into your equipment! This seldom impedes character advancement, since the equipment they want often relies on stats that are already used heavily by their play style.



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IMPROVING YOUR GEAR

Just relying on the items you pick off the ground is good enough for some time, but this isn't quite strong enough to get you through the most challenging parts of the game. To raise everyone's chance for survival, use the following methods to improve weapons, helms, and armor.

Direct Upgrades

Blacksmiths are able to change all weapons and certain helm/armor pieces into better versions of themselves or entirely new object altogether! The tables for these are listed in the equipment chapter.

Early in the game, upgrade weapons as often as possible and ignore armor upgrades as better equipment is likely to drop soon anyway. As you start to reach Level 30 and beyond, start to look toward armor conversions as well. Some of the most impressive items can be made in this manner (Mithril Armor/Helms, for example).



AREAS TO UPGRADE ITEMS

- ③ Weapon Upgrades: Northern Blacksmith District
- ③ Change Weapons Within Tiers: Dwarven Area
- ③ Armor Changes: Southern Blacksmith District
- ③ General Bonuses: Promenade Blacksmith (Or Any of the Others)

Item Bonuses

If you have an item type that you already enjoy, there are still ways to improve upon it. Save your game, then go to the Promenade Blacksmith. Give those smiths the item in question and use spare materials to improve on its design. These bonuses add Attack values to weapons and raw Defense to armor and helm pieces. In addition, helms/armor pieces receive special properties from these activities.

This is where things get tricky. Helms and armor pieces can only have a single, special property, so getting these items to a high bonus is not your only goal. These special properties can dramatically alter the importance of any item. Objects with the Elite property add a character's level to both their Hit Points and Skill Points. Gaining +50 HP/SP at high levels from a single item is just incredible.

So, each item upgrade is a chance to land on a special ability that completely suits your characters. Once such a property is found, stop upgrading and count your blessings. It isn't worth losing that property just for a few more bonus points.



SPECIAL ARMOR/HELM PROPERTIES

NAME	EFFECT
Acute	ACC Increase (Based on Level)
Aerial	Damage from Flying Enemies -30%
ColdEx	Cold Resistance +25
ElecEx	Lightning Resistance +25
Elite	HP/SP +Current Level
FireEx	Fire Resistance +40
Fleet	Movement +20%
Frail	Penalty to Defense -4
Heart	Damage Motion Evasion 30%
HeatEx	Fire Resistance +25
Holy	Damage from Undead -30%
IceEx	Ice Resistance +40
Lunar	All Elemental Resistances +10
Old	SP Consumption -15%
Potent	All Skills +1, SP Consumption +30%
Regen	HP Regeneration (Mid)
Rich	Increases Gold Dropped by Enemies
Soul	Damage Motion Evasion 45%
Spry	SP Recovery Up (High)
Star	All Elemental Resistances +15
Summon	Guardian Summon Skill +2
Thorn	Reflects 25% of Melee Damage
Tough	Hit Points +40
Vacci	Half Damage from Poison
Wall	Defense +Level
Wise	SP +50
ZapEx	Lightning Resistance +40

Picking the Right Accessory (For Each Occasion)

Over time, parties accumulate a substantial number of accessories. These can be sold for a hefty sum because they don't need to be appraised, but it is wise to hold onto a fair selection of them as well. Unlike weapons and armor, accessories don't fall into the category where one is perfect for a character. Instead, as mission objectives change, so too do a character's needs change. Accessories are a great way to handle that.

While facing a wide variety of foes in melee, it is sensible to look for Evasion or Hit Points in a primary character while boosting the ability of a support character to deal damage or otherwise assist the leader. However, a battle with many archers and mobile targets yields a greater need for movement speed and a high Accuracy. Boss battles where you are fortunate enough to have a Card for said enemy can be defeated much more easily by equipping that Card, because of the extreme damage reduction this produces.

Try to have two or three good accessories for each character that is heavily played. This way, there are always choices for what to take into a fight.

While characters cannot change equipment in the middle of conflict, a dire situation can be avoided by retreating, rearming, then coming back with the right gear and full health!



WHO TO TAKE

There is an immense degree of personal preference when it comes to choosing a secondary character. Whether you enjoy ranged characters (Elwyn, Neige, or the Minstrel), heavy fighters (Lazarus or the Samurai), fast attackers (Mao or Volg), or a healer (Ryuna), there are missions which are undeniably easier with certain people in the party. For instance, any fight with extensive Undead is trivialized with Ryuna in tow. Elwyn and the Minstrel eat flying targets for breakfast, and the heavy melee types wade through squads of grunts.

Many players choose Xion and a consistent buddy for many of the missions, but it is a good idea to level one or two other characters enough to fill a missing role if a future mission should become troublesome.

On the other hand, players are given many opportunities to level characters to their heart's content in *Shining Tears*. Not only are there recurring battle locations during the campaign, but the Mirror World also gives people the chance to revisit old missions at any time, even ones with boss fights. This means that players can even choose to level all of their characters; it takes quite a dedication of time to do this, but serious fans aren't daunted by that!



PROGRESS AND LEVELING UP

Getting your favorite characters to high level is important for completing the game, beating Advanced Mode, and for taking on the challenges of the Tower of Heaven. This process can be quite slow unless you take on the hardest challenges available to you and hit them with full force.

During the early parts of the game, the Mirror World hasn't been unlocked yet, so the only way to level is to plunge ahead and defeat each mission to the best of your ability. For the most experience at this stage, kill every enemy, collect their treasure, and move on.

Later, due to numerous events in Shildia, the Mirror World is revealed. This allows the characters to relive past battles, getting full experience each time. This is useful for getting extra treasure, picking up missed Cards, and leveling characters who are lower in power. Yet, it's agonizingly slow to shoot for high level by taking on these fights.



Instead, the best way to level strongly is to consistently take your best characters into the new campaign battles and push forward into higher-power enemies. The later campaign battles, even in Normal Mode, are worth far more experience than the recurring battles in and around Shildia. It's sometimes hard to keep plunging forward, since the challenges cause you to rely on more healing items and occasional retreats, but that is a sign that you are fighting where you "should be" for substantial experience.

This becomes more pronounced once the game is defeated and Advanced Mode is unlocked. Though Advanced Mode is slow to bring down, the experience from the major campaign missions adds up quickly, even for characters that defeated Normal Mode with ease. Getting to Level 50 in Normal Mode is nearly impossible without a huge investment of time. In Advanced Mode, 50 is a stepping stone!



Dealing With Tough Spots

HAVING TROUBLE?

- ③ Buy More Healing Items, And Use Them!
- ③ Bombs, Magic Mirrors, and Other Battle Items Should Be Used Often Too
- ③ Level a Secondary Partner That Removes a Weakness in Your Primary Configuration
- ③ Retreat to Save, Gain Health, Restore Partners, and Take a Breather
- ③ Use Cards Against Consistently Nasty Foes
- ③ Switch Equipment During Retreats to Maximize Elemental/Magical/Melee Protections

It's well and good to race ahead, but some of the missions may seem so tough that it's frustrating to take them on without building a few extra levels. There are measures to take if that becomes the case. For one, your weaponry must be as well-smithed as possible. Getting everyone's weapons to fourth tier is a big step, but even within

the highest tier there are large differences between the weapons. Ensure the weapons you choose are ideal for your character build; the tradeoff between raw attack power and magical effects is important to understand. Take weapons that have effects you need, and don't be blinded by sheer attack values.

Also, examine play strategies for a given mission if it seems too tough. Perhaps there are problems because your character configuration has a weakness toward specific enemy types. For example, a Xion/Lazarus pair has much running to do against full groups of casters and archers, and Xion/Ryuna don't put out enough damage in some cases, so they face a tight spot against non-elemental melee types that come in huge numbers.



Whatever the issue, there are always choices in how to deal with problems. Leveling a third character is always wise, since this optional character can fill the void for missions where your normal pairing has a weakness. If you decide to do this, choose a secondary member who has different weaknesses than your primary partner.

There are some nice strategies to quickly level up a character that has lagged behind a bit. These are helpful if you want to move onto a secondary member but haven't played much with them before. This requires you to use the Mirror World and play through one of your old missions repeatedly (ad nauseum, really). There are criteria in choosing which mission to play. First, find a mission that Xion, as your highest-level damage dealer, can defeat on his own with ease. This means you won't have to rely upon your low-level secondary member to contribute much.

Next, choose a mission with large numbers of melee enemies. Melee enemies come against the party aggressively, allowing Xion to cut them down with ease; the last thing that you want is to have to chase down individual archers or running casters.

For the best results, look for a single-level map. Missions that have multiple parts to them can drag on a bit. You want missions that are fast and easily repeatable.

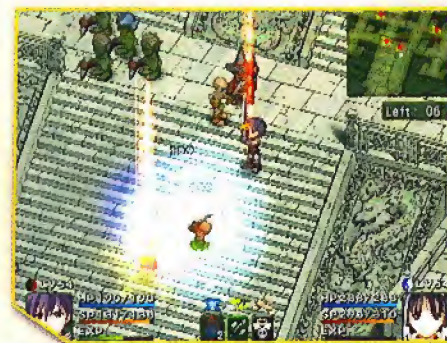
Finally, the repeated completion of a given mission gains you a great deal of comfort, speed, and information about it. Enemies are reliably defeated, the level is quickly completed, and treasure chests can be gathered easily, all of which result in titles and bonuses. Not only are your characters gaining experience from defeating their enemies, but they also get an added boost because of the bonus experience given to them at the end of the mission: their reward for all their patience and practice.

Another method to pass difficult missions is to use more healing and occasional retreats to rest and regroup. This is the brute force method. None of the missions are quite vicious enough to demand this in the Normal Mode (even in the final dungeon), but there are fights in Advanced Mode that can push so hard that most parties have nothing left to give. It's always safe and wise to retreat to town at that point and buy more healing items. Your place in the mission is saved, and nothing is lost by heading back.

While time intensive, it is even fair to retreat out of vicious battles and rearm between skirmishes against different squads on a map. For example, look at a fight where there are enemies who are weak versus Fire and use many Ice attacks. If these foes are allied with Lightning users, there is no single defense that is perfect against them. However, the squads are often far enough apart that you can face groups in the order of your choosing!

Thus, it's easy to fight the squads who are weak versus Fire while equipped with defensive items that raise your Ice resistance, then bring completely different gear to protect yourself from Lightning while clearing the other squads. Accessories are perfect for this, and it doesn't take too long to grab enough resistance items for every occasion.

Even switching characters in the middle of a battle works without restarting the mission. Thus, you can clear entire areas of non-Undead bosses, then bring Ryuna in for fighting Skeletons and



Mummies that are with the bosses. In the same light, Elwyn helps to rip apart archers and other mobile targets, but Lazarus can be tapped for trashing thick packets of melee foes later in a battle.

Recurring Battles

These missions occur because of events in the world, but they don't actually change the plot of the game or advance things. Indeed, these are called Recurring Battles because clearing them does nothing to prevent them from happening multiple times.

This gives players the ability to grab extra money and items while facing high-level enemies for their stage of the campaign. Often, the foes in Recurring Battles are tough enough to challenge a party and gather a fair portion of experience. These work well for gaining experience in Normal Mode, when it's easy to push ahead and end up being a bit ahead of yourself; in other words, getting to challenges so quickly that a bit of leveling is useful. Later, Advanced Mode reduces the effectiveness of these extra battles because the regular campaign fights offer more than enough experience and take so long that there isn't much need or drive to repeat the Recurring Battles.

There is one advantage to these small skirmishes that remains in Advanced Mode; Recurring Battles are quite short, making them quite effective for getting used to new characters and raising Xion's friendship with them.



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FARMING FOR MONEY AND DROP ITEMS

It doesn't take terribly long to realize that some powerful items are gained by farming in this game. Farming is defined as the repeated killing of certain enemies for various rewards. There are many random drops in *Shining Tears* that improve your party. Because of this, players who desire faster upgrades should farm certain areas for the following items.

Money

Money is one of the easier things to farm because it drops so dependably from normal monsters and squad leaders. There are few tips to provide here besides fighting many squads of higher-level monsters. Some enemies drop items that sell for high sums, and that is worth noticing.

Early in *Shining Tears*, there are foes that consistently drop Rune Helms. These helms don't seem all that special or wonderful, but they have the ultimate trait for farming money: they don't need to be appraised! Each Rune Helm sells for its full value without any investment. Harvesting these from the modest enemies that drop them nets considerable sums.

There are several items throughout the game that drop without a need for appraisal, and all accessories are like this too. Selling such gear is often enough to fully supplement upgrades, healing items, and most other expenses.



Useful Helms and Armor

Buying helms and armor from the stores in Shildia is almost like throwing away money. For one thing, these pieces are rarely strong enough to be worth any money at all. They have few bonuses and lack the better attributes than can be found on equipment.

Instead, the best gear is found by taking on longer missions in the campaign and the Tower of Heaven. There are more chests in these missions (especially when there are bosses around), and there are also many more squads to bring down. Each squad leader has a chance to drop some nifty goodies instead of raw coin, so these larger fights are treasure troves of potential drop items.

Any large fight ends up netting the party many pieces of armor. While back in town, appraise these and sell the helms/armor that don't have the more powerful traits.



Smithing Materials

Smithing materials fall from squad leaders, bosses, and from chests. Many of the materials aren't hard to find with a short investment of time, but Dark Matter and Orihalcum can be rough to gather. These two materials are required for some of the higher-tier weapon conversions, so it is important to hold onto the few drops you find.

It is hard to improve your chances of getting any specific material from this category while fighting. The key to having enough crafting materials rests more on their efficient use than anything else. Never sell rare crafting materials or use them for non-essential upgrades. This way, you can avoid the need to farm Dark Matter/Orihalcum.

In the sad case where you have entirely run out of needed crafting materials, the best route to gather more, though still random and somewhat slow, is to go after large numbers of low-level squads from earlier battles. All of the crafting materials drop from monsters that are low or high level. Thus, it's much faster to get crafting goodies from creatures that are easy to wade through.



Cards

Card collectors have quite a trial on their hands, because getting every Card in the game is a rewarding but lengthy process. Each creature (whether normal monster, squad leader, or boss) has its own Card. These drop at a very low percentage when the creatures in question are slain. Finding cards from generic monsters isn't so rough, because people end up fighting hordes of them at a time. Squad leaders are rarer, as there are few of them on a given level, and bosses are absolutely stingy about giving away their Cards.

This is probably the best example of a time when collectors must farm what they need. Keep coming back to kill the enemies you need Cards from, and hope for the best.

The Tower of Heaven helps tremendously in this, toward the end of Normal Mode, because it brings back quite a few early enemies that you may have missed. In its higher floors, the Tower of Heaven presents new foes and Cards (and items too!), making it an absolutely essential stop for many players.

Finally, the reward for completing the Tower of Heaven is the Medal of the Heavens. This accessory significantly increases the likelihood of a Card dropping. This beautiful accessory makes Card collecting much easier.



RECEIVING TITLES

At the end of each full mission (not individual battles within missions) you receive a title if certain conditions are met. For the vast majority of missions, your group will receive one of these, since most of the titles aren't difficult to receive. The experience rewards for titles are often modest when compared to the amount needed each level, but these bonuses are given to all characters, even the characters who did not participate in the battles.

For the greatest experience rewards out of this, attempt to complete levels as quickly as possible. The shorter a mission's duration, the higher the reward, regardless of which title you attempt to receive.



Speed Demons

To complete missions as quickly as possible, use the Mirror World to your advantage. For your mission, choose Volg and Mao and kill only the monsters that you need to complete the mission. Skip looting the treasure chests. The speed of these characters combined with only completing the minimal requirements for a mission gains you the fastest times for mission completion.

Higher kills grant decent titles. Slaying 100 foes gets your group the Centurion Title and a modest bonus. Killing over 1,000 foes in a single mission is enough to grab the award as Butchers, and a much higher reward.

Titles are awarded for looting high numbers of chests, killing many enemies, rushing through content, and so forth.



TITLE QUICKLIST

TITLE	VALUE	CONDITIONS
Butchers	Very High	Kill 1,000 or More Enemies
Centurions	High	Kill 100 or More Enemies
Chain Knights	Low	Rack Up A High Chain Combo
Chain Masters	High	Use Only Combos and Keep a Very High Chain
Heroic Knights	Moderate	Kill Every Enemy
Ruthless Twosome	High	Ignore Treasure Entirely
Treasure Hunters	High	Grab All Treasure and Avoid Fighting
Whirling Dervishes	Moderate	Clear Map Very Quickly

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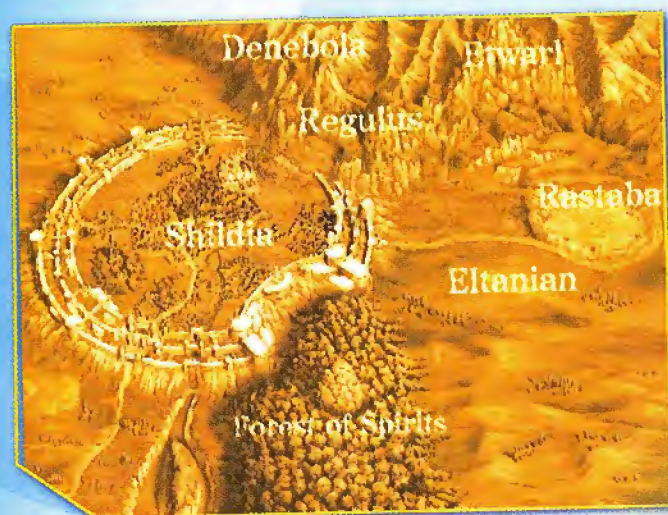
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A PATH FRAUGHT WITH DANGER

After a series of unknown events, Xion washed up on the shore of Shildia. Found and rescued by Elwyn, he underwent a brief recovery before being able to move around and regain most of his senses. Still struck with amnesia, Xion is forced to figure out his own past and what that means for his future as well.



FIRST ARC: THE COMING WAR

Talk to Elwyn and Doctor Pios after Xion wakes. The conversation doesn't explain everything, since Xion remembers little more than his name, but he gets to see much of what the doctor and his Elven friend are like. Although Xion is bereft of funds, these two seem comfortable enough with the idea of letting him work his way out of their debt. For Pios, this means that Xion plans to be his assistant until Xion is done paying for his stay. Elwyn, being a long-term planner when it comes to money, wants more out of him in the future. She saved his life; now she wants cash!

The inn where Xion recuperates is called the Heroes' Hearth. It is run by a Wolfman named Volg, who has a fierce reputation and a direct but terse manner. Xion is free to talk to the residents of the inn once he is up and running around. Learn a bit about the various folks in the area by doing this, and the plot advances once Xion talks to Doctor Pios.

At this point, Pios explains a bit about the rings. He doesn't know the whole story about them yet, but between his research and Elwyn's ideas on the matter, everyone gets a decent view of what the rings MIGHT be capable of doing. Either way, the rings are magical in nature and are quite valuable (better to hold onto them and see what happens).



There is another brief respite, as Xion rests for a few more days. He is now feeling like himself again, and Doctor Pios asks a favor of him. The doctor requires White Lily; this flower grows in the Regulus Hills, where there are supposed to be placid monsters that rarely attack anything. Still, there could be danger. Talk to Doctor Pios again and tell him that Xion is ready to go. Together, Xion and Elwyn leave the inn and venture forth into their first mission!

AWAKENING POWER (CAMPAIGN MISSION 1)

- ③ Learn how to make basic combos and Charge Attacks
- ② Defeat all enemies
- ③ Collect the White Lily

Mission Explanation

The goal in this mission is to defeat all of the monsters, learn about standard battle actions, and collect the White Lily for Doctor Pios. The enemies here are not very powerful, aggressive, or numerous; this is an easy time for you to master the early mechanics of the game in a single-player environment. If you wish to avoid the tutorial and get right into the action, tell Elwyn not to explain anything. This puts Xion right into the thick of things!



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Mission Bestiary



2 x Hound Squads (w/ Hellhound Leaders)



1 x Giant Bat Squad (w/ Evil Bat Leader)




1 x Paste Squad (w/ Red Gel Leader)


Beating the Mission

There are monsters in small squads as Xion moves from left to right across the linear map. Elwyn is nearby and provides fire support during the fighting. These monsters are low in level and cannot take many hits even from simple combinations. Charge attacks with Thousand Thrust cuts them to ribbons, and are used wisely when there are several monsters close together. Because there are no bosses, it is a simple matter to clear everything and end the mission by stepping on the green flag on the right side of the map.



Gaining That First Level

During this first mission, Xion and Elwyn are each likely to gain a level. Whether during or after the mission, players are free to allocate points because of these levels. To do this, enter the options menu (by pressing ) and select Status from the options. The Status menu shows the stats of the characters (either two of them if used during a mission or all characters in the party when used outside of battle).

To spend everyone's points, look through the Status screen and highlight the attribute that you wish to improve for a character. Press , then press right on the controller to add points to an attribute. You are free to put points into attribute in any order. There are no level caps for attributes, so you can raise one, two, or even three different attributes each time.

These points aren't allocated permanently until you specifically choose to leave the Status screen for that character, and the game pops up a query before this allocation occurs.

As for Skill Points, choose one of the skills on the right side of the screen. Use the same method to increase one of those. The window updates the stats of the skills instantly, so it is possible to check through the abilities of each choice before dedicating to any one of them. A great early choice for Xion is Defense Up, since it adds 5 Defense, a fair sum for such an early level.



After the mission, talk to Doctor Pios and Elwyn until Pios fully understands everything that happened. This gives him a few things to ponder, but he must leave to deal with a patient. Take this time to exit the inn and explore Shildia!

A TRIP INTO TOWN

- ① Grab a Free Herb from the docks
- ② Meet local characters (Tiaris and Red)
- ③ Explore, shop, then return to the Heroes' Hearth
- ④ Talk to Doctor Pios to begin a mission

Just outside the inn, there is a girl named Tiaris who is a wealth of information, especially for players new to the game. Talk to her to access a huge store of text explanations of the game's attributes, mechanics, character skills, and so forth. As you make progress through *Shining Tears*, Tiaris learns new things and is happy to explain those as well (every time Tiaris learns something new, a note appears above her head that stays until you talk to her).



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To the right of the inn is a dock where several small boats are moored. Search the far end of the dock (where there is a sparkling light) to find a free **Herb**!

Another point of interest is a Beastman named Red. He stands a bit to the left of the Heroes' Hearth. Red has impressive knowledge of the city and its people; any time that you are a bit uncertain about what to do, talk to Red. Sometimes, he'll mention a piece of gossip or town wisdom that explains where Xion should go next.

Use the Options Menu to travel quickly between different quarters of the city. At the moment, Xion has access to Heroes' Way (where the inn is located), the Promenade (with more stores and a glorious fountain), Wildcat Lane, and the Blacksmiths' Quarter (with Dwarves who can upgrade weapons and armor). At the moment, Xion still is quite poor and won't be able to purchase many items, but exploring can be fun even if you don't have much cash.

When Xion returns to the Heroes' Hearth, Doctor Pios is already there. Volg is preparing to send some wine to the castle (for a dinner party that King Balboa is having). As part of Xion's payback, he and Elwyn are going to be sent up there to deliver the wine. Save your game first, since you never know what the nobles will do when they get into all that wine.



To start the next mission, speak with Doctor Pios and choose to "Go to the castle." Pios is also willing to explain about the Card system before Xion departs.

ENCROACHING SHADOWS (CAMPAIGN MISSION 2)

- ③ Defeat 12 Black Cat Leaders

Mission Bestiary



3 x Black Cat Squads



2 x Ninken Squads (w/ Black Cat Leaders)

Mission Explanation

The delivery to the castle goes well, but things pick up quickly when Xion and Elwyn stumble onto an alleged thief. This rat-like Beastman is fast, and nobody from the castle has a chance to catch him. Before thinking to worry about the consequences, Elwyn puts on one of the rings. This starts a fight to defeat all leaders of the raiding enemy force.

There are 12 leaders to defeat before the battle ends. Each of these appears on the mini-map as a red dot. Clear the area quickly and exit the battle when you are done.



Beating the Mission

This is another mission that doesn't offer many challenges. Don't worry, things get considerably more difficult later. The Ninjas who cover the castle grounds have very few Hit Points. Clear the squads of these enemies near the stairs, then work around the circle to defeat the leaders who have canine pets surrounding them. Practice charge attacks, especially against the somewhat larger groups (notice that Thousand Thrust does high damage AND pushes enemies back enough to keep them from easily attacking Xion).

The bushes in the area are a bit more than suspect. They move about from time to time, and a simple strike at them reveals that there are hidden ninjas there as well. Although these don't count as leaders, and aren't needed for completing the mission, everyone receives more experience by defeating a higher-percentage of enemies on a battle map. So, hack away if that sounds interesting.

After the victory, a short scene with the intruder concludes, and Xion returns to the Heroes' Hearth.



SHORT DOWN TIME

- ③ Talk to Doctor Pios about the Rings
- ③ Meet a Priestess of Etwarl
- ③ Talk to Doctor Pios to begin a mission

There isn't much to worry about between missions this time. Since Xion is still building funds, it's best to simply move on to the next mission. While the stores may have some crude armor, it's almost always better to find items during missions and use your money for healing equipment, weapon/armor upgrading, and so forth.

After talking to Pios after the last mission, Xion is free to explore and talk to everyone. When you wish to advance, speak to Doctor Pios again and trigger the entrance of Ryuna, a Priestess of Etwarl. She needs assistance back at her temple, and she is determined to get things done soon.

After the meeting with Ryuna, talk to Pios and say that Xion is going to go after Ryuna. Her destination is clear, so it shouldn't be an issue of catching up to her.



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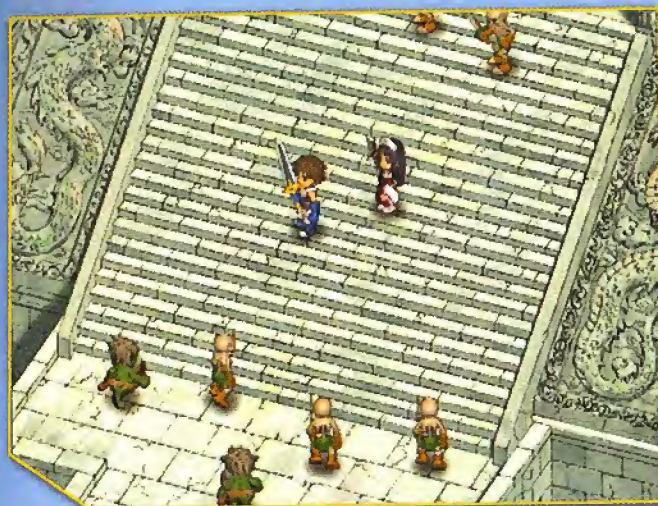
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THE DESTINED MAIDEN (CAMPAIGN MISSION 3)

● Defeat 6 Orc Leaders



Mission Bestiary



4 x Skeleton Squads (w/ Orc General Leaders)



2 x 3rd Class Orc Squads (w/ Orc Corporal Leaders)

Mission Explanation

The outside of the temple is controlled by multiple pockets of Orcs and Undead creatures. Xion and Ryuna must battle to the top of the steps. Each squad of enemies has only a few supporting members. When the fighting is over, enter the temple to start the second stage of the mission.

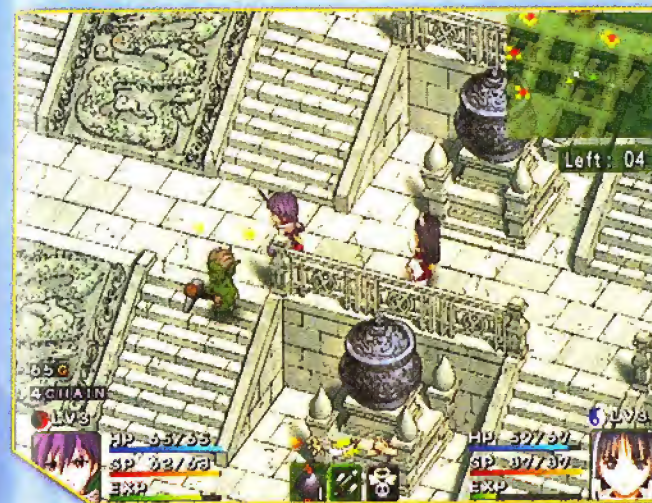
Beating the Mission

There are two new aspects to the fighting here at the temple. First, there are Undead; the tactics that work well against these Skeletons are detailed in the tip box. There are also ranged enemies. Some of the Orc leaders in this area are casters, and their fire spells deal far more damage than a crude melee attack. Learning how to handle casters is a very important lesson in The Destined Maiden.

Most of the time, casters are surrounded by groups of melee troops, though it is possible to find entire squads of casters in some levels. To deal with casters, aggressive hit-and-run tactics are often needed. Charge attacks kill these softer enemies at a satisfactory rate; the steps are to charge, attack, and retreat before spells can be used against you, if any casters remain. This prevents Xion from getting blown down by spells.



With only six squads to defeat, the outer part of the temple doesn't take very long. Going inside triggers a cutscene, and Xion learns what has happened to the people of the temple. Without much hesitation, Ryuna's loyal friend Lazarus heads out to stop the remaining attackers, who have made away with Ryuna's necklace. Xion follows.

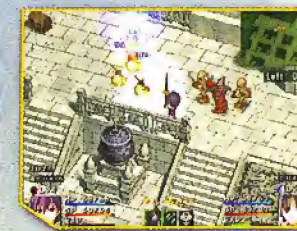


Destroying Skeletons the Easy Way

Skeletons are certainly one of the more challenging foes to defeat in *Shining Tears*. When Ryuna isn't around, it takes a great deal of effort to put these enemies down for the count. Normal kills against them won't always destroy the Skeleton. Instead, the creatures rise again after a dozen or so seconds.

Killing Skeletons multiple times eventually destroys them, but using Ryuna's Turn Undead Link Skill is the best way to get the job done. Levels with high concentrations of Undead enemies are a breeze with Ryuna around; she also has a skill to raise the damage characters inflict against Undead targets, making things even easier for these levels.

As for positioning, knock down many or all of the Skeletons with Charge Attacks. Next, circle Xion around to the far side of the down Skeleton squad and have him link with Ryuna to Turn Undead. This immediately destroys any downed Skeletons; it also deals damage and has the potential to kill any Skeletons who are still moving about.



FOREBODING FOOTSTEPS (CAMPAIGN MISSION 4)

● Defeat the Orc General

Mission Explanation



This mission introduces a large battle and boss-oriented goals. Instead of being forced to knock out each leader of this enemy force, you are given the choice to clear out as much or as little of the enemy force as you wish. The only target who needs to fall for the green flag to appear is the Orc General, a caster in the lower-right side of the map.

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9 x 3rd Class Orc Squads (w/ Orc Corporal Leaders)

4 x Giant Bat Squads (w/ Evil Bat Leaders)



1 x Orc General

Beating the Mission

There are many squads of Orcs and Bats in this map. The Bats are often defeated quickly, but many of the Orc groups take more than a lone Thousand Thrust to eliminate. Luckily, Lazarus brings a ton of firepower and survivability to a fight. Lacking the healing powers and anti-Undead gusto of Ryuna, Lazarus instead does high melee damage and has impressive Hit Points. If Xion gets dinged-up during any part of the fighting, retreat behind Lazarus and let him take the beating for a time while clearing the way.

The money is beginning to pick up here, primarily due to the increase in monster numbers. Those wishing to ramp up for weapon and armor upgrades should certainly clear this map as thoroughly as possible. Beyond the money, this increases the chance of getting craft items (e.g. Ceramic, Mithril). These items are required for upgrading your equipment, and the rewards are substantial for those who use them wisely.



The actual Orc General is quickly overcome if Xion and Lazarus hit him simultaneously. Even alone, Xion shouldn't have any problem taking down this caster; just feel free to use a healing item ahead of time if Xion's Hit Points are low. It's always better to be on the safe side with healing items, especially considering the trivial cost of the low-end Herbs.

With all said and done, Lazarus and Xion witness several important events. The two return to the temple, collect Ryuna, and hasten back to Shildia!

TIME TO TRY OUT SOME UPGRADES!

- ③ Appraise new equipment
- ③ Spend points trying to fit into new armor
- ③ Look at Weapon Tables/Check for upgrades
- ③ Talk to people outside the Heroes' Hearth (Especially the man in Blue)
- ③ Talk to Elwyn
- ③ Talk to Volg and "Move Out" to begin mission

Learn about Weissritter from Volg and the other members of the mercenary group. The staff is a tad small at the moment, but things pick up quickly with the addition of your good friends. Explore the town again and see if you have picked up enough materials to improve any of your weapons. If so, raise Xion's sword to a second tier blade and see the tremendous improvement in its damage capabilities.

After talking to a few more people and settling in, tell Volg that you are ready to move out and join Neige for an important mission.

A FRIGID HEART (CAMPAIGN MISSION 5)

- ③ Defeat 9 Squad Leaders

Mission Explanation

Xion and Neige travel to the central camp to push back the vanguard of the enemy force. There aren't many squads in the region yet, and they aren't going to support each other well enough to withstand a deadly assault.



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RESOLVE OF STEEL (CAMPAIGN MISSION 6)

Talk to Volg and ask to go on another mission. This sends the two of you to the Dwarven Caverns.

③ Defeat the Master Mage!

Mission Explanation



Almost 100 enemies have invaded the Dwarven Caverns and threaten to overwhelm the few defenders that remain. These foes primarily consist of summoned Slimes and Golems. At the far end of the passages is a Master Mage who is obviously behind this attack. Xion and Volg must fight to the right side of the map and slay this Mage. While no other targets are required for victory, the fighting is fast and easy, so all targets should be eliminated for extra money and drop opportunities.



Mission Bestiary



5 x Sword Grunt Squads (w/ Commander Leaders)



4 x Rune Knight Squads (w/ Emerald Paladin Leaders)

Beating the Mission

Neige and Xion aren't going to have problems unless Xion forgets to stay in front and draw the enemies' attention. The nine squads on this map are spread out across the camp, making it easy to pull them one at a time. Rush Xion forward and strike into the heart of each squad with a Charge Attack. Once in the center of a cluster, use a Link Attack to damage everyone around, and see the true power of Neige.

The mounted Rune Knights are fast attackers who are keen at dealing damage. Watch out for these Centaurs and be ready to use hit-and-run tactics against them in future battles, when they have more Hit Points and better numbers.

This is one of the first chances to see what Xion is like as a Good character, driven by the Light Ring. While not as powerful in direct melee, or when using melee abilities, Xion gains the power to shoot a Lightning-based attack with his normal weapon chains. Also, some of his magic-based powers are more impressive in this mode.

There are several chests around the field; pick these up before leaving via the flag in the upper-right. The mission is incredibly short, but this is one area that you can return to at almost any time, since the enemy army loves to camp in this area.



Mission Bestiary



9 x Paste Squads (w/ Red Gel Leaders)



14 x Golems



1 x Master Mage



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Beating the Mission

The enemies that attack the Dwarven Caverns are slightly more powerful than what Xion's been facing up to this point. The Golems have higher Hit Points than previous foes. Use Charge Attacks against duos or combo them repeatedly with your partner when there are single Golems.

The Slimes are soft and go down quickly, but they aren't shy about swarming to deal damage. For safer victories, eliminate the majority of a Slime group in the initial rush, which is entirely doable with careful Charge Attacks. Remember to release attacks a moment early to avoid being interrupted by enemy interception.

The path to the right end of the cavern is toward the lower side of the map. Use the bridges to move down there, then plow right (through many Golems and Slimes). Look for the impressive number of chests in the map, five of them in all, and collect all of these items for future upgrades and a bit of bonus experience.

The Master Mage is a pushover, but there are many Golems and Slimes surrounding him. Pincer this group with Volg on the left and Xion on the right. This cuts through all of the outer slimes, and reveals the Mage and Golems. Attack the Mage quickly and directly, ignoring the Golems for just a moment. Doing so prevents the caster from bringing his damage into the fight.

That ends the battle and saves the Dwarves. Things seem a tad darker after talking with Chieftain Maurry, but fear naught. There are many places to visit after this!



THE WARMTH OF SNOW (CAMPAIGN MISSION 7)

- ① See Weissritter talk with King Balboa (Cutscene)
- ② Talk to the citizens outside the Heroes' Hearth
- ③ Take care of shopping, appraisal, and upgrades
- ④ Return to Dwarven Caverns and search the far-right side for hidden Mithril
- ⑤ Return to Heroes' Hearth (Watch scene)
- ⑥ Talk to Volg again and head out
- ⑦ Defeat the last Master Mage

Mission Explanation



One of the Giants is trapped up on the peak, and there are more monsters around than the Giants have ever seen. To save the Giant, climb up the icy steps and bridges with Mao, fighting the whole way. Avoid the balls of ice that roll down the first half of the pathway, and defeat the caster boss at the top to complete the level.



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7 x Gizmo Squad (w/ Spark Cloud Leader)



5 x Mummy Squad (w/ Master Mage Leader)

Beating the Mission

Xion and Mao have a small set of fights ahead, but the conditions are such that it won't be entirely easy. During the first half of the level, the ice that rolls down the stairs can hit either of your characters and deal damage most of the time it contacts them. The timing on this is consistent; use that to avoid harm by fighting away from the stairs until the way is clear. Race to the next section of the map, fight until another ball passes, then climb some more.

The Mummies here are Undead, and they won't stay down without something to cleanse them. Unlike Skeletons and some of the really high-level Mummies, these enemies never rise again once felled, so Xion and Mao won't have any problems beating the level (it's primarily an issue of kill percentage, since Undead that aren't cleansed won't count as slain).

There are three chests in the map. Collect these while climbing, and don't worry about the destroyable barrels in the area unless you feel like being extremely thorough and destructive.



The various bridges and ice ledges on this map really lend themselves to linear attacks. Thousand Thrust is a champion for that style of combat, so Xion is free to rely on that. Notice that Mao is extremely aggressive in engaging the enemy. Always have healing items ready when she is in the party, especially before she masters some of her defensive skills.

When the Master Mage on the upper ledge falls, Xion saves the Giant and is able to return to the Heroes' Hearth with very promising news.



THE BRIEFING ROOM

Consider yourself fully into *Shining Tears* now! All of the simple, tutorial maps are past and Volg is ready to take Weissritter to a higher level of action against Shildia's enemies. To further this, he has opened the Briefing Room. For players, this is an especially exciting moment. Two-Player Mode is unlocked at this stage. In addition, Pios has prepared the two Mirrors for everyone's use. These Mirror Worlds allow the group to return to previous battles and engage old enemies with one or two players.

- ③ Explore the mysteries of the Otherworldly Mirrors
- ③ Talk to the Beastman (Bengal) who is now outside the Heroes' Hearth to learn about Reputation
- ③ Replay a few early missions for extra experience and materials (Optional)
- ③ Walk down into the Briefing Room and learn about a few problems
- ③ Gain money and experience in the Great Plains Warfare battle (Optional)
- ③ Leave the Heroes' Hearth to trigger a Scene
- ③ Return to Briefing Room for Campaign Mission: Ambush at Old Town Way

THE GREAT PLAINS BATTLE (OPTIONAL RECURRING BATTLE)

- ③ Defeat all 12 Leaders

Mission Bestiary



5 x Goblin Squads (w/ Hobgoblin Leaders)



7 x Arrow Knight Squads (w/ Heavy Bow Knight Leaders)

Mission Explanation

For a full counteroffensive, Weissritter is sending itself into the heart of the enemies. These battles occur in the open plains, so there is going to be a ton of room to maneuver most of the time. Bring down 12 squads of enemies and leave via the right side of the map.



Beating the Mission

Though not a required battle, this is a great place to pick up some fast money and experience. Your party also gets to train against mounted archers (Centaur Archers at that)! These quick squads make it very difficult to score a lethal Charge Attack in a single pass because they break up and move about constantly.

Practicing boxing the archers together with your partner, especially if you have a live player to assist you, which makes archer battles so much easier.

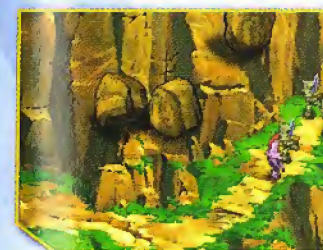


THE DEFIANT (CAMPAIGN MISSION 8)

OBJECTIVES BY MAP

- ③ First Map: Defeat all 7 Leaders
- ③ Second Map: Defeat all 16 Leaders
- ③ Third Map: Make it to exit and defeat Boss

Mission Explanation



With the help of your recent allies, Pios' plan is put into effect. This starts a series of three fights that push the enemy army across the landscape and back into the forest beyond. Though this is straightforward in concept, the actual combat is more rigorous than previous missions. Prepare to be put to the test!



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



5 x Sword Grunt Squads (w/ Commander Leaders)



2 x Goblin Squads (w/ Hobgoblin Leaders)

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SECOND MAP



10 x Sword Grunt Squads (w/ Commander Leaders)



6 x Copper Knight Squads (w/ Ruby Paladin Leaders)



Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



6 x Sword Officer Squads (w/ Cool Commander Leaders)



3 x Death Archer Squads (w/ Hell Sniper Leaders)



1 x Boss Fight!

Beating the Mission

The enemies on these maps come in greater numbers; these squads are something up to a dozen members strong, and that changes the battle dynamic very quickly. Xion cannot wade through and avoid being hit in return just because of a good Charge Attack. Instead, teamwork starts to blossom at this point in the game.

Use your favorite ally and work on advanced positioning. Get used to providing greater protection for archers/casters, and bring melee allies to the front sooner and with greater ferocity. Charging Xion's attacks and using a tough partner to pull enemy squads back to your location is very effective here as well.

The first stage of the mission is certainly the easiest. Grunts and Goblins face off against the party, and there isn't enough room for these foes to surround you. Keep your partner in proper formation and advance methodically.



The second stage is harder because of the Copper Knights. These Centaurs do impressive damage in large groups, and your Defense might not be high enough to survive the barrage for very long. Keep a full supply of Herbs ready to go if that is the case, and use one here and there to keep yourself from being anywhere near low health during the engagement.



In the third map, the enemy army finally regroups and starts to apply a bit of strategy to the fights. There are tougher Sword Officers in that map with Death Archer support; this is a truly splendid combination for your enemies to use. Draw individual squads away from their supporting allies to reduce incoming damage, and don't rush unless your characters are high level or your confidence is strong.

Take the time to clear any archers that get behind your group, and be cautious about following ones that flee toward other squads. It's always safer to retreat and let them come to you if you have any worries.

At the end of the map, on the right side, is a thicket of trees. When Xion enters these, there is a brief scene, and you meet a powerful blade master of the enemy forces. Don't underestimate this boss,

but know that he won't have any support during the fight, which is a wonderful change compared to future bosses.

Stay mobile and watch the attack pattern of the boss. It shouldn't take long to see that he has only two attack types; he charges for a moment and rushes toward your last position, then leaps backward and swings briefly while standing in place. The charging strike is the more dangerous move, so the goal is to avoid that and get attacks in between these.

Rush to the side when the boss is glowing yellow and prepare your own Charge Attack. Just as the boss is returning from his rush, move in and swing at the position to which he returns! This nails the boss every time, and his standing swings don't deal much damage at all. At most, you need a few Herbs to compensate, but that is no real expense.

When your enemy retreats, the exit is revealed and three chests drop. Open these for extra treasure, then triumphantly leave the field of battle.



A CALM BEFORE THE STORM

- ③ Talk to Pios, he says that it's time to unite the people
- ③ Travel to the Promenade and talk to the people there (focus on the royal guard on the north side)
- ③ Return to the Heroes' Hearth for a scene
- ③ Enter the Briefing Room and choose the next mission

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WILDCAT LANE INVASION (OPTIONAL RECURRING BATTLE)

③ Defeat the Fuuma Ninjas

Mission Explanation

Now that the enemy army is fully in the surrounding territory, some of their special forces are able to infiltrate the city and cause trouble. This blocks off access to those parts of the city until your party goes in and clears things out. The Invasion of Wildcat Lane is one of the first such battles you may face. There are no ramifications if you choose not to engage the enemies here, but it's a fun and challenging run if you do.

Beating the Mission

As with many of the optional/recurring battles, this is not an easy fight when it is first unveiled. The Ninja are of higher-level than the normal campaign foes at this period. Also, the fighting in Wildcat Alley is cramped. Take someone who is skilled at clearing enemies quickly.

Elemental issue pops up here somewhat heavily, especially since there are troops with high resistances to all three elements. It's better to use non-elemental attacks the majority of the time unless you have a character to reduce foes' defenses toward elemental attacks.

Mission Bestiary



2 x Ninken-Frostbite Squads (w/ Koga Ninja Leaders)



3 x Ninken-Firetooth Squads (w/ Koga Ninja Leaders)



3 x Yellow Tiger Squads (w/ Koga Ninja Leaders)



1 x Yellow Tiger Squads (w/ Fuuma Ninja Leaders)



Be cautious around the various Ninja leaders; they are able to use ranged magic, teleport, and drop traps that explode once you approach. Even the lower Ninja troops can use ranged magic, and when they scatter it becomes harder to disrupt all of their spells. Take down small clusters at a time instead of wading into whole squads.

THE DANCE OF LIGHT AND SHADOW (LAZARUS RELATIONSHIP MISSION)

③ Defeat 10 Heat Commanders

Mission Explanation

Lazarus is trying to take on the world again, but people who have a high relationship with him get a chance for a special mission at this point. If you have adventured with Lazarus enough before, he'll head off with Ryuna and Xion gets to hurry after and assist the two of them. Together, they face a modest selection of melee troops on the open plains.

Beating the Mission

This is a fight that is filled with fun and slaughter! Having Lazarus at a decent level for this, which is almost a given to even receive this mission, means that Xion is used to partnering with him. Use Lazarus' potent Link Skills to slice through entire ranks of enemies. Use Xion to get around the flanks and rear of these large squads and Link with Lazarus. Dragon Spiral offers some of the easiest leveling in the world when enemy troops are packed together this comfortably!

There are 14 squads on the field, and it's best to destroy them all. The experience from this puts both Xion and Lazarus in much better shape.



When the festival of meat has ended, walk to the left end of the map and exit to return to the Heroes' Heart.



Mission Bestiary



10 x Spear Officer Squads (w/ Heat Commander Leaders)



4 x Goblin Butcher Squads (w/ Heat Commander Leaders)

BLACKSMITHS' QUARTER INVASION FORCE (OPTIONAL RECURRING BATTLE)

③ Find and Defeat the Boss

Mission Explanation



This battle opens fairly early in the city siege, and it won't be easy to defeat unless you have Ryuna ready to go; there are many Skeletons in the mix, and none of these are going to stay dead without serious work or a Turn Undead spell. You don't receive much for clearing the Blacksmiths' Quarter, but this mission is still important since you won't get to upgrade weapons without getting those nice Blacksmiths back to work.

Mission Bestiary



5 x Kwanca Squad (w/ Hell Sniper Leaders)



2 x Worm Squads (w/ Snake Worm Leaders)



1 x Kwanca Squad (w/ Dark Sniper Leader)

Beating the Mission

Because Kwanca Skeletons have a charged ice attack, you must not stand in place while attacking groups of them. Stay mobile, get around to their sides while avoiding this initial damage burst, then hit their numbers quickly. Use Ryuna and Turn Undead to mop up the squads once their numbers begin to dwindle. Other than that, this skirmish is extremely short and shouldn't pose serious problems.



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UNDER THE FLAG OF THE BEAST (CAMPAIGN MISSION 9)

- ③ Complete any chores in town
- ③ Return to the Briefing Room for the next mission "Siege on the City Walls"
- ③ First Map: Slay all 9 Squad Leaders
- ③ Second Map: Slay all 13 Squad Leaders
- ③ Third Map: Defeat General Dresden

Mission Explanation

Starting from the third, inner wall of Shildia, your party must battle out to the first wall and clear the city of invading forces. There is a boss at the end, but he isn't too nasty, all told. The bulk of the enemy force uses melee, but they have some archer support. Be ready with spare Herbs, but don't worry too much so long as your weapons are upgrade to second tier by now.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



4 x Sword Officer Squads (w/ Cool Commander Leaders)



5 x Goblin Butcher Squads (w/ Prince Goblin Leaders)

Beating the Mission

The first map has no ranged enemies, and is composed entirely of Swordsmen and Goblins. Clear the top route first, then work on the slightly more populated lower section. While fighting, open all chests (there are MANY on this map). There are always a few on the right side of the map alone, with two being in the cubby behind the final Goblin squad.

It's at this point in *Shining Tears* that Link Skills become even more important. Normal combos and Charge Attacks deal enough damage to hurt the enemies a fair bit, but the wide-area aspects of Link Skills made them crucial for clearing these mega-sized squads. Try out all

of the Link Skills with your favorite partner and see which ones are best for your play style, or simply accept the recommendations provided in the Character Chapter and run with them.

The second map has several squads of Death Archers, making things more complicated. Use your partner to box these ranged troops into corners and come at them from both sides. Don't let ranged troops spill out into the open areas. Once they scatter, it takes ages to clean out all of them.



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SECOND MAP



10 x Spear Officer Squads (w/ Cool Commander Leaders)



3 x Death Archer Squads (w/ Cool Commander Leaders)

The more specific and dangerous challenges come in the third map, even before you reach the final fight with General Dresden. The Blood Archers are mixed heavily with Halberd Grunts; it's possible to take extremely amounts of damage quickly when engaged with both of these groups at the same time. Pull the Halberdiers away from their buddies and attack them in packets before advancing. This takes a long time but is worth the wait.

The back of the third map is very brutal. There are multiple squads of Halberdiers crunched together with a squad of Archers. Again, pull the early foes and lead them back to the left and fight them there.

When advancing into the main host, hit the Archers early and use combat items (Bombs, Perfume, etc.) to soften them a little. Getting that part of the skirmish under control is almost as much of a challenge as the upcoming boss.

Speaking of the General, he is standing just beyond that group of enemies. Advance, watch the scene where Xion meets this important leader, then prepare for a drawn-out slugfest against Dresden and his bodyguards. His private guard consists of Sword Officers and Heat Commanders; these respawn after being slain, so it is impossible to keep the field clear for long.



Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



10 x Halberd Grunts (w/ Heat Commander Leaders)



4 x Blood Archer Squads (w/ Dark Sniper Leaders)



1 x General Dresden Boss

The best trick is to alternate between Link Skills and Charge Attacks. Use Link Skills when there are many targets; once the guards are cleared, switch to Charge Attacks and short combos to deal fast damage to the General directly. While a huge man, Dresden doesn't dish out nearly the level of pain that you might expect. In fact, he can't accomplish much at all as long as his guards are kept clear.

If your partner is fine for health, continue this aggressive method of killing the General. However, there is a safer and slower technique that is much easier if your ally falls. Should Xion become alone, use a slow hit-and-run game with Thousand Thrust attacks. This avoids

the General's attack, which takes forever for him to charge; you are free to dash in, hack away, then pull back to avoid his swipes. The guards may hassle you a little, but they don't rush in enough to protect their leader, so the running game keeps them at bay.

The treasure that falls upon the General's death is good for this stage of the game. Indeed, this entire mission is worth repeating in the Otherworldly Mirror if you have the time and urge to gain extra experience and better loot! All told, even with three maps this is a short and lucrative mission.



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BEWITCHING WOODS (CAMPAIGN MISSION 10)

- ③ Talk to Pios to find out that Volg has gone out
- ③ Travel to the Promenade and watch scene with Volg
- ③ Walk to the right and speak with Volg again
- ③ Return to the Briefing Room and listen to Pios
- ③ Make a choice to follow Elwyn or hold back
- ③ First Map: Defeat the Orc Major
- ③ Second Map: Defeat the Orc Major
- ③ Third Map: Defeat the Orc Major
- ③ Fourth Map: Defeat the Orc Marshal
- ③ Boss Map: Defeat Prince Galahad



The final step before beginning this mission is important because it determines whether you play the next stage with Elwyn and it substantially alters your relationship with her. However, it is possible to be close to her even if you refuse to go along; it just takes more effort later. Following Elwyn raises your relationship factor with her and locks you into playing with her for the large mission ahead.

Mission Explanation

The reinforcements inside the Forest of Spirits contain humanoid and bestial squads. Expect to see Orcs mixed with a number of aerial and poisonous units. The goal is to clear several maps' worth of these while the rest of the group takes care of problems elsewhere. Your distraction should draw the attention of Prince Galahad, so a boss fight is almost inevitable here. Bring Antidotes aplenty when you come into these fights!



While personal relationships change based on your choice with Elwyn, the enemies in this mission are static. If it makes any difference, consider that Elwyn is quite skilled against flying and poisonous targets (and there are squads with those abilities in the later maps).



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP

-  6 x 2nd Class Orc Squads (w/ Orc Sergeant Leaders)
-  3 x Ogre Bat Squads (w/ Slash Bat Leaders)
-  3 x Orc Warrant Squad (w/ Orc Major Leader)
-  1 x Orc Major

Beating the Mission

The first map is fought in the Elven village, so there isn't too much treasure lying around. Instead, there are waves of Orcs to face. There are also a few squads of Ogre Bats. In the cramped quarters of the great tree there, it is somewhat tough to get around enemy squads. To compensate, stand side-by-side with any melee partners, or block off the route to support partners and let the enemies come to you. Either way, trade blows instead of trying to push through.

Pushing through gets Xion hurt too much to be worth it, even for some of the best Link Skills.

The Orc Major is linked with a squad of Orcs at the top of the map. Go all the way around the tree on the ledges to reach this area. Keep the pressure in these squads and advance toward the leader without trying to snipe him specifically. It won't be too long before the exit appears, and your party can climb to the next area.

There are many Orc Warrants and Spiders on the second floor. The Warrants are mostly ungrouped, so they exist entirely to hassle your characters. Kill them when they come close, but there is no need to go after all of them. Instead, the fun experience comes from clearing the Spiders; these are worth moderate experience and don't take very long to kill. To find the Orc Major on this level, clear the central area and fight the huge number of Warrants beyond it. The Orc Major is among them, and the exit point is farther ahead, at the top of the map.



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SECOND MAP



12 x Orc Warrants



14 x Young G Spider Squads (w/ G Spider Adult Leaders)



1 x Orc Warrant Squad (w/ Orc Major Leader)

On both the second and third maps, Antidotes drop with relative frequency. Don't be shy about using these to stop the poison that the Spiders inflict on your characters. As long as you came in with a number of Antidotes, there should be no danger of running out.

The third map is prepared in much the same fashion as the second one; there are random Warrants and many Spiders to contend with. The Orc Major is in a cluster of Warrants north from the center

of the map, and you can either try to clear the entire area or rush right in. Either way, be hesitant about taking on the entire mass of Warrants at the same time. If your Defense isn't high enough, healing is often needed to get through the initial volley as you weed the group down.



The fourth map contains the Orc Marshal, a Mage who is able to summon a squad of poisonous Mummies to aid him. The rest of his map is covered with squads of Ogre Bats, which are light on Hit Points but fierce on the attack. Again, high physical Defense is a great boon for this region, since there the Marshal is the only elemental attacker. Use standard hit-and-run moves against the Bats, then work in to destroy the Marshal. The Mummies are not able to swarm your party if you fight them in the narrow hedges where the Marshal stays! Back off to avoid his spells, and force the Marshal to move and cast. Once he falls, only the exit and the boss of this engagement remain.

Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



14 x Orc Warrants



14 x Young G Spider Squads (w/ G Spider Adult Leaders)



1 x Orc Warrant Squad (w/ Orc Major Leader)

Galahad has a flying machine, and that gives him practically all his defense right off the bat. Throughout this fight, the enemy Prince is able to determine when and how you get to attack him. Knowing his pattern makes all the difference between victory and failure here.

The following is Galahad's attack pattern. He flies evasively at first, so there is no way to attack him directly. From on high, he throws five area-of-effect bombs toward the nearest party member—there is just over a four count between each bomb. These explode for

modest damage. After five throws, Galahad comes in closer, flying directly over to your nearest person and going into a bombing frenzy. Get away from the area and let range be your defense. Galahad repeats the frenzy three times and lands right after finishing the third flurry.

This is your only time to attack the menace; come at him with everything you have! Charge an attack while he is finishing his third frenzy, and use that to open your combo against the boss. After several seconds, Galahad rises again and repeats his bombing runs. Turn back to defensive fighting and wait for your next chance, and continue this until the fiend is down and out.

Apart from the Prince's bomb runs, there is danger from running into the various Orc groups around the area. Luckily, these can be cleared and kept clear, which makes maneuvering much safer in the future. If you plan on going for the long haul instead of a quick victory, try to intentionally trigger and kill the Orcs early on, then go after Galahad after the masses are gone.

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FOURTH MAP



12 x Ogre Bat Squads (w/ Slash Bat Leaders)



1 x Ghoul Squad (w/ Orc Marshal)

The Orc groups on the left side are much easier to clear. The lower portion is already vacant when the battle begins, and the Orcs in the top-left aren't numerous. Still, these are entire groups of casters; they can do enough damage in a single burst to badly hurt Xion, so heal and stay at high health when attacking these clusters. Once the left is open, you have more than enough room; the other Orcs won't come over at all, so there is no need to mess with them.

With the battle against Galahad complete, the Forest of Spirits is safe. Your party is able to return to Shildia without a heavy conscience, and there are usually a few nice treasure pieces to sweeten the pot.



Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



2nd Class Orcs



Orc Marshals



Orc Brigadiers



1 x Boss Galahad



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SANDSTORM (CAMPAIGN MISSION 11)

- ③ Talk with party during post-battle scene and decide on your reaction to Mao's performance
- ③ Engage in several battles against the enemy camps (though these are recurring battles, it is necessary to trigger the next stage of the campaign)
- ③ Suggestion: Attack the Southern and Central Camps for faster experience and completion (these are fast and rewarding fights)
- ③ New Briefing Room mission appears after several such fights, select it to move forward in the story (select Desert Reconnaissance)
- ③ First Map: Destroy 4 Poison Paste Generators
- ③ Second Map: Destroy 7 Poison Worm Generators
- ③ Boss Map: Defeat the Enemies' Leader

The decision with Mao is another point of character development. If you decide to answer positively, her feelings toward you improve. If you instead answer hesitantly, she won't get that boost.

Mission Explanation



The invaders have selected a crafty position for the following battle. There is just enough maneuverability to get yourself in trouble, and there are monster-spawning devices and traps all over the place. The goals are based around quickly destroying these generators.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



10 x Feather Commanders



7 x Wind Mage Squads (w/ Lightning Master Leaders)



4 x Poison Paste Generator

Beating the Mission

Right off the bat, the first map has poisonous cacti that are to Xion's right side when he begins. Destroy these from range (if possible) or with a high-speed rush. Use an Antidote after beating clusters of these things if you have been poisoned. Even worse, there are shooting cacti to the north and at many other tactical positions on the map. These have longer range and are thus a royal pain to avoid. Run past these and fight squads of enemies when the cacti are off-screen. On the whole, this is much less taxing than taking out every single cactus patch.



The Generators start off without any of their troops, but they start to spew Poison Pastes onto the field once your group approaches. Try to eliminate squads of foes near the generators without triggering this creation process. Once the Pastes start to appear, move in and focus on the Generators while trying to hit nearby Pastes as well, to keep the numbers thin. This brings down Generators with fair speed.



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Mission Bestiary

SECOND MAP



15 x Lizard Men Squads (w/ Alligator Men Leaders)



7 x Poison Worm Generators

The second map is an even tougher nut to crack, even though there are fewer cacti there. The generators are more heavily guarded, and they throw Poison Worms and Viper Worms into your midst. Pull the Lizard Men in the area away and deal with them first, since swarms of these melee foes hit hard and effectively in melee.

In the middle of the map is a lower area that is quite toxic. Move through this area quickly by running, then climb the far side and use an Antidote immediately (they cost only a trivial amount compared to repeated use of better healing items).



Using large-scale Link Skills here pulls in experience like a net! The Lizard Men must cluster heavily to be at their best, so anything that uses a wide line or a circle effect is absolutely splendid for clearing them. Lazarus and Neige really have some good times.

Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



3 x Venom Gizmo Generators



1 x Powerful Mage Boss

When the final Generator goes down, move to the upper-right and exit the map. A surprising boss fight awaits!



The Mage you face in the last map is more than a match for most pairings. Add to that a few problems from the poisonous cacti that make it hard to maneuver and this fight gets quite ugly. For survival, learn the color of the Mage's spells. The color of this caster's charge lets you know which attack is about to begin.

The map also has three Venom Gizmo Generators. If you are willing to confine the battle to the lower part of the map, these can be avoided. However, once triggered, expect the Generators to cause problems, so take them out if you get close to them during the battle. For the best middle-ground, take out the rightmost Generator and leave it at that; this gives you a fair bit of elbow room.

SPELL COLORING

CHARGE COLOR	SPELL EFFECT
Blue	Tracking Ice Wave (Narrow, Mostly Single Target)
Red	360 Degree Fireball Spread (Clockwise Pattern)
Yellow	Large Lightning Burst (Fires to Four Corners, Non-Tracking)

The Mage's primary spells deal damage well, but a skilled player can avoid them the vast majority of the time. The Ice Wave is great



at tracking, but it's too slow to catch a running character (and it gets caught on the cacti sometimes, so position them between yourself and the wave).



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The Fireball Spread gets the boss hurt more often than you because it is slow and predictable. When the caster is charging, get to a position just a tad earlier in the clockwise rotation than the Mage's current facing (e.g. If the caster is a 6 o'clock, stand at 4 o'clock). This keeps the first attack from hitting you. Next, move clockwise with the spread for the first few attacks before turning on the boss while the now useless spell continues. This lets Xion score massive damage without fear of reprisal.

While Lightning Burst goes out in 4 directions, there is a substantial distance between the bolts. Retreat during the charge time, then slip in between the two bolts that are coming your way. Again, it's not hard when you know what to expect!

At the end of each spell, the caster Blinks away, ending whatever attack you were launching against him. Instead of being in the middle of a long Charge Attack, use short combos toward the end of these spells to keep from wasting time and leaving yourself exposed.

In no time, the boss falls and you are given a short scene to enjoy. Take all that wonderful treasure before you leave. Because this boss only has two maps in the mission leading to this fight, it is very fast to farm middle-end gear from this mission.



STRAY CAT RHAPSODY (MAO RELATIONSHIP MISSION)

- ③ Take care of town errands and return to Heroes' Hearth for scene (or do a random battle for same effect)
- ③ Go into the Briefing Room and select Operation: Mao (A Relationship Battle)
- ③ Defeat the Lightning Master

Mission Explanation



As long as Xion responded positively to the question of Mao early, and has taken her out to a battle, this event opens before the next Campaign Mission is ready. After you runs some chores in town or finish a random fight, this event occurs and you must hurry to stop any problems. Mao is the focus of this sequence, but you must choose a different partner to help her. There aren't terribly many enemy squads, so this isn't a frightening battle, but the sheer number of Knights is a threat unto itself.

Mission Bestiary

- 4 x Bronze Knight Squads (w/ Sapphire Paladin Leaders)
- 4 x Minotaur Squads (w/ Sapphire Paladin Leaders)
- 1 x Minotaur Squad (w/ Lightning Master Leader)

Beating the Mission

The squads on this wintry field are spread out and allow you to take single groups without drawing others in the conflict (unless that is your desire in the first place). The high number of melee foes mean that each squad plans to rush your characters; prepare Link Skills that take advantage of that.

Neige is a bit of a weak character on this map because there are few creatures who are soft toward Ice here; this limits her ability to blow down large numbers without a huge expense of Skill Points. Lazarus (for damage and survival) or Ryuna (to break the enemy's resistances and heal) are both quite effective in this area.



If you haven't redone the camp battles frequently, this may be your first time facing Minotaurs. These melee beasts are simple to destroy, but they make it hurt by using more aggressive attacks as they die in droves. Use hit-and-run tactics against these troops, even though they look like they won't be too rough.

The Lightning Master is hidden in a squad at the top of the map. Drive into that group with a fully-charged Thousand Thrust and aim to bring this caster down before he can support anyone. After he drops, the flag appears to complete the level. All's well that ends well.



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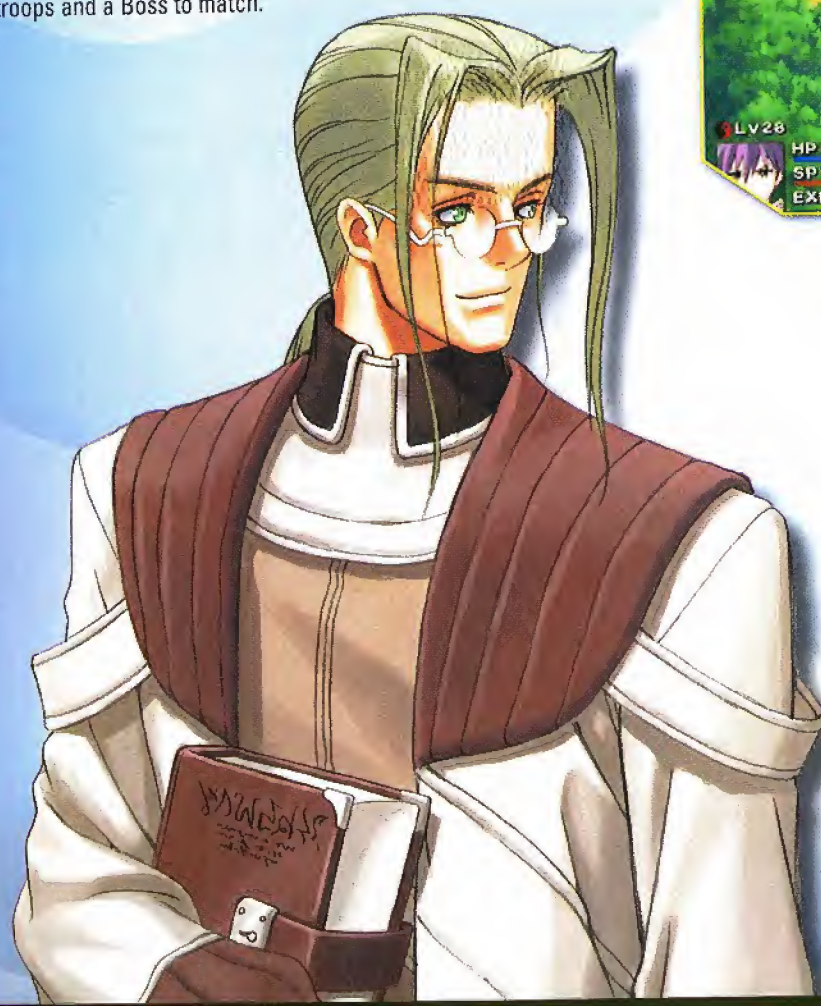
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A KNIGHT'S HONOR (CAMPAIGN MISSION 12)

- ③ Talk to the people around town, especially those in the Promenade. They explain about the character of your newest enemy.
- ④ After learning more about the enemy commander from the people in town, return to the Heroes' Hearth and speak to Pios (he says if you've talked to enough people by responding that it's time to "Move Out")
- ⑤ March down the steps into the Briefing Room and choose to fight The Battle of Eltanian
- ⑥ First Map: Defeat all 15 Leaders
- ⑦ Second Map: Defeat all 22 Leaders
- ⑧ Boss Map: Defeat the Holy Knight

Mission Explanation

Out in the fields east of Shildia, a great many Knights have gathered. There are melee troops and archers all over the place, so it requires a solid companion, and one that you've learned to trust. Fire resistance is a useful thing to have, since scout reports tell of Centaur archers with fiery arrows. The ultimate goal is to bring down the leader of the Centaur forces; prepare for a fight against many high-Attack melee troops and a Boss to match.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



8 x Bronze Knight Squads (w/ Sapphire Paladin Leaders)



7 x Flame Arrow Knight Squads (w/ Sapphire Paladin Leaders)

Beating the Mission

The first map occurs during fine weather, so the Centaurs are able to make great use of their speed and power on the battlefield. The spacing of the Squads is enough to keep Xion from running into multiple groups at the same time; use that distance to pull the relatively small Squads out to their deaths. Have the character in your party with higher Defense trigger these fights. Luckily, there are no special monsters or dangers on this field, making the fight a simple one.

The fates are even kinder as Xion enters the second stage of the mission. As the heavens open, rain turns the field into a nightmare of mud and hard movement. Although you are affected by this, the Centaurs suffer the most for it! Archers cannot run away as quickly, making it easier to bring them down in groups. Approach enemy Squads from the green areas; these aren't as sodden and allow characters to move at full speed. By ambushing enemies from these faster areas, you prevent them from escaping and push them into the mud.



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SECOND MAP



17 x Bronze Knight Squads (w/ Sapphire Paladin Leaders)



5 x Flame Arrow Knight Squads (w/ Sapphire Paladin Leaders)

After the fall of the second map's leaders, run to the flag and enter the final stage of the conflict. A Holy Knight from the enemy force moves out to engage your party, and he has both Knights and Paladins to assist with his attack against you. There is a short delay after a Squad falls before the Holy Knight can call for reinforcements, so there certainly is reason to knock these foes out of the way while fighting. It gives you headroom to fight in peace.

The Holy Knight has a fair degree of power through both direct attacks and his abilities. To defend himself, this hero calls upon a strong wind that throws your party away from him. This is more debilitating than

deadly, but it makes long combos harder to continue. Use moves from range, when possible, or engage in attacks that keep your characters mobile.

Moves that deal wide-area damage are ideal when the Squads are up and running. Ice Rings or Ice Walls from Neige, Lazarus and his evil Dragon Spiral, Multishot from Elwyn, and so forth. These deal damage and keep the Holy Knight on the defensive. Don't hesitate in using restorative Skill Point items, as needed, since this battle drains them quickly.

There is a fine scene at the end of the fighting, after you have grabbed the treasure! It's back to the Heroes' Hearth to learn more about the state of your enemies.



Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



2 x Silver Knight Squads (w/ Platinum Paladin Leaders)



1 x Boss Holy Knight

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BONDS OF BLOOD (NEIGE RELATIONSHIP MISSION)

- ④ Speak with Neige in the Heroes' Hearth and answer affirmatively to go on a special mission
- ④ Select "In Rastaban Desert" from the Briefing Room to begin this mission
- ④ First Map: Defeat 10 or more Leaders
- ④ Second Map: Defeat 10 or more Leaders
- ④ Boss Map: Defeat the Enemy Boss

Mission Explanation

Neige has important matters that are outside the scope of Weissritter. To aid her, Xion travels to the desert and begins a search. The reasons and goal of this quest are not revealed to the other members of the group, but the cause is just. There aren't any choices for your allies, since Neige is a given here. To prepare for the upcoming fighting, grab extra Antidotes and focus any damage items toward fighting enemies with quite varied elemental resistances, even anti-Ice Squads are out here.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



8 x Poison Worm Squads (w/ Viper Worm Leaders)



10 x Orc Private Squads (w/ Orc Superior Leaders)



Beating the Mission

There are many Squads of Worms and Orcs in the first map. Your group faced the dangers of the desert before, but there are a few perks this time around. No natural dangers grow in this region, meaning there are no cacti or poisonous fields of plants. The only major troubles come from the enemies themselves. Because of the large Squad size for both the Orcs and Worms, it's wise to use area-of-effect attacks. Draw enemies back onto Ice Walls or bear the damage and waste entire groups with Ice Ring assaults!

If you aren't looking for extra trouble, rush to the right and down to exit the map after destroying the minimum number of Squad leaders. However, there is a fair amount of experience to be gained here, so the extra fighting can be a good thing.



Mission Bestiary

SECOND MAP



12 x Imps



15 x Orc Lieutenant Squads (w/ Orc Colonel Leaders)

Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



10 x Poison Worm Squads (w/ Viper Worm Leaders)



1 x Enemy Boss

The second map is not as forgiving. As before, there is a large, poisonous area in the center that deals heavy damage to everyone passing through. Have Antidotes prepared and don't bother curing until you arrive at the other side, since the poison re-inflicts itself instantly if you cure within the boundary of the toxic plants.

There are Ice-resistant Squads of Orcs in this area, and they are all archers. The flying Imps are isolated and patrol this area, and they also count as Bosses. It's easiest



to pass through this area quickly, without worrying about killing any more creatures than necessary. Slay Imps to get toward that ten count to leave the area, something you can achieve by rushing past most of the archer groups. As with many Xion/Neige pairings, using a sword like Blaze Limiter is the best, since the enemies strongest to Neige become weakest to Xion with a fiery weapon.

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Neige and Xion return to the area where your party confronted the mysterious mage, known as Visage to your group. This time, there is someone else there. The greater threat is from the full set of Worm Squads that litter the place, making it hard to avoid the poisonous plants and the blasts that rain down upon Xion.

The Boss you face uses tactics and abilities that your group has seen and defeated before. There are no changes to this routine, so the methods used previously work again in this encounter. However, there are a few changes in priorities that greatly improve your chances in this skirmish.

First off, the Worm groups in the center and to the right must be destroyed. They take up a great deal of space. Use Ice Wall to wound their advancing wave of flesh and have Xion Thousand Thrust his way through the remainder. Gravity Slash is useful here as well. After quickly clearing the way, Xion and Neige are able to properly attack the Boss, bringing him to the ground in short order! Although only a morsel of intelligence is gathered about the enemy's plans, this event brings Xion and Neige much closer together!

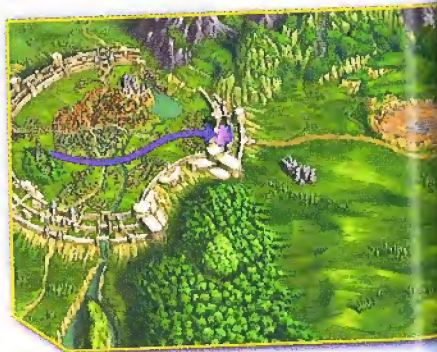


REQUIEM FOR A HERO (CAMPAIGN MISSION 13)

- ③ After finishing town chores, enter the Briefing Room and look at the new battle development (these are some serious problems)
- ③ Choose Mobile Fortress Strike and begin the next Campaign Mission
- ③ First Map: Defeat the Boss
- ③ Second Map: Defeat All 8 Leaders
- ③ Third Map: Defeat the Sky Commander
- ③ Fourth Map: Defeat over 10 Leaders
- ③ Boss Map: Defeat the Holy Knight Boss

Mission Explanation

The Birdmen of Shildia are ready to help in the battle, and they take the party into the thick of things, bypassing the entire enemy army in the process. It's a crazy ride, but the safe landing makes it all worthwhile. Bring your favorite Squad-busting character as a partner, as there are many thick Squads in this mission. Upgrade any armor that has come along, if possible, since a higher Defense makes these fights much easier.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



3 x Minotaur Squads (w/ Silver Commander Leaders)



1 x Boss

Beating the Mission

Anyone who passed through Neige's Special Mission is ready for this problem to appear. Sure enough, your party doesn't make it more than a few steps without running into old (and bad) news. This time, however, there are few enemies in the way. Left without support, the Boss has made a huge error in attacking your party. Use the empty space to eliminate your foe! Not only does this keep things off of your back while fighting, but it is possible to pin the Boss to the walls and force him out of his safe mode.

With your group's up-to-date attack and magic, this Boss cannot stay in the fight for long. After a round or two of attacks, the skirmish ends. Travel to the right and start clearing the regular Squads from the top floor of this structure. There are only three Minotaur Squads up there, and these aren't even large, but just wait until you see what is on the lower floor.

There are several hard-to-find chests that you can grab before descending the stairs. Don't miss these if you are in a treasure-hunting mood.



The action starts without delay on the second map. There are Squads on two sides of your characters, and it's tough to protect your partner; it's good to have a frontliner for this part. Don't hold back, since the level is an easy one after the initial burst. Use Skill Points heavily and blow through the large Bodyguard Squads.

The third level only has a single Squad of troops. These Birdmen are allied with the enemies. It's easy to beat this level quickly using a burst of area-of-effect attacks at the center of the great. All of the flying targets crowd around at first and allow themselves to be killed in droves. Waiting can actually lead to slow, drawn-out, and painful battle; the Birdra forces take off and drive bomb your group if given some time. Thus, an early rush is a fitting and enjoyable way to overwhelm the Squad here.

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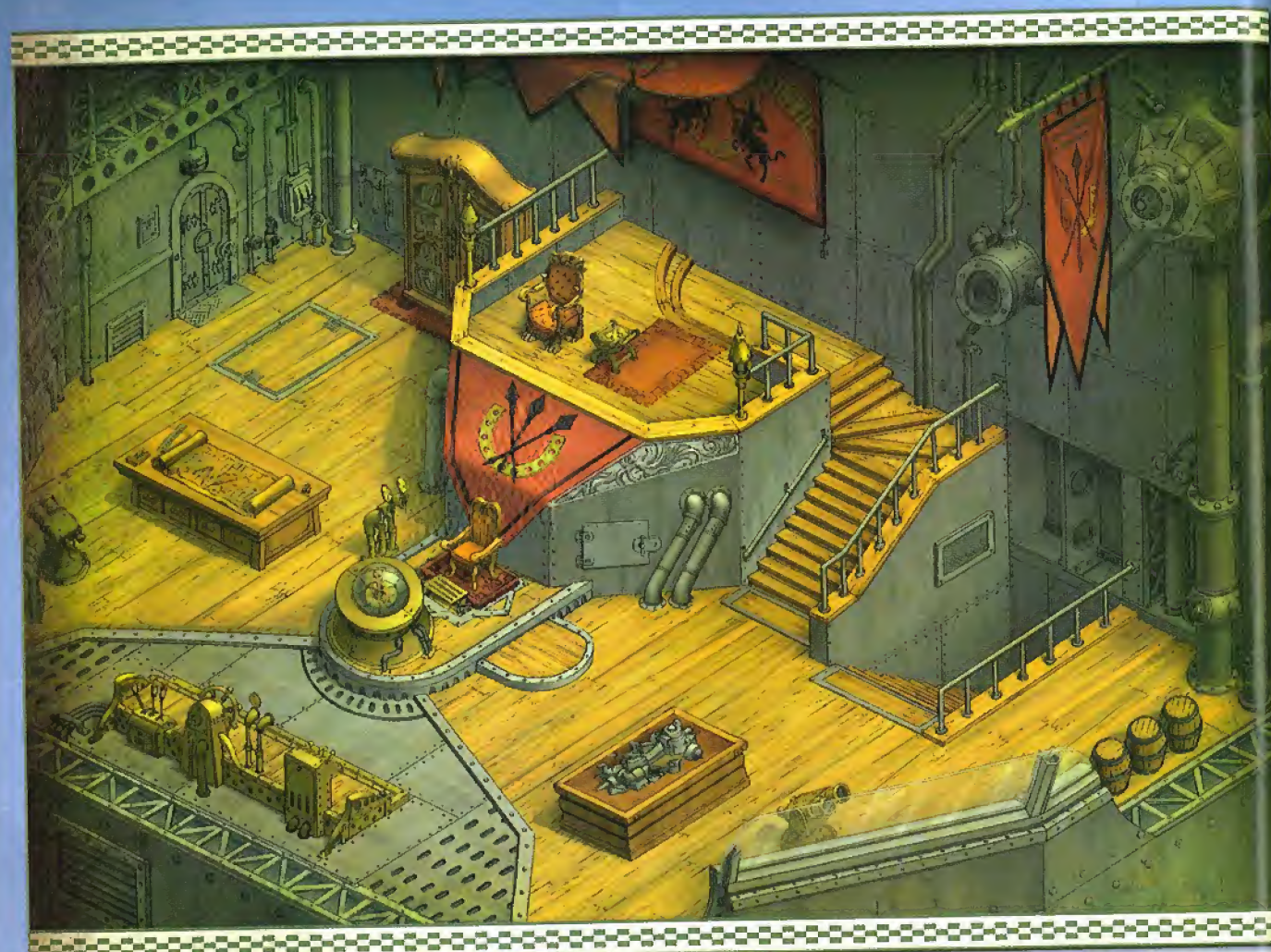
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SECOND MAP



4 x Sword Bodyguard Squads (w/ Silver Commander Leaders)



4 x Halberd Bodyguard Squads (w/ Silver Commander Leaders)



While nothing is there to stop Xion from leaving the level immediately after, there are treasure chests on the left side, right corner, and bottom (by the flag). Collect these, as desired.



The fourth map is loaded with Lizards and later Dark Elves as well. The Lizard's heavy Squads make a direct assault difficult because of their numbers, damage, and ability to Confuse characters. Draw the first groups out and keep your partner in check to avoid triggering extra forces. Move methodically through the leveling using these tactics and rely on heavy Link Skills to wipe Lizardmen Squads without resorting to slower slugfests.

Once the Dark Elves show up, farther right in the map, it's even more important to clear the Lizardmen fully before going forward. Getting Confused while the Dark Elves shoot at your party is a major pain. Remember to reverse your controller's direction when Confused to continue along your original path.

Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



1 x Birdra Squad (w/ Sky Commander Leader)

There are more than enough Centaurs guarding the generators you seek. These troops are divided between many Leaders, keeping the Squad size small and agile. Before moving to the right and tempting the Holy Knight in battle, clear as many of these missile Squads as possible; they make the fight far more challenging, and the more that die before the Holy Knight begins his attack, the better things look.

Even after Cheiron rushes to engage your characters, his preferred areas of the map are out in the open. For a breather, squeeze onto the catwalks on the left or right side and clear more Centaurs from those places while getting a better feel for things.

Cheiron uses a fast charge to deal some of his damage and resorts to his area-clearing Knockback after meeting foes directly. Get his attention with Xion and lead Cheiron around the level with your partner following behind, doing quite a bit of damage without much reprisal. If the Holy Knight ever turns, spin and release a Charged Thousand Thrust to get his mind back on the real threats. For the ultimate victory via unfair methods, run away from Cheiron while Lazarus is doing a Dragon Spiral. Both your friend and foe follow, causing Cheiron to take gut-wrenching damage.

Treasure chests are scattered around the map and can be stolen during the fight. This is sometimes a nifty way to get extra healing items or other restorative goodies without jumping back to the Heroes' Hearth.



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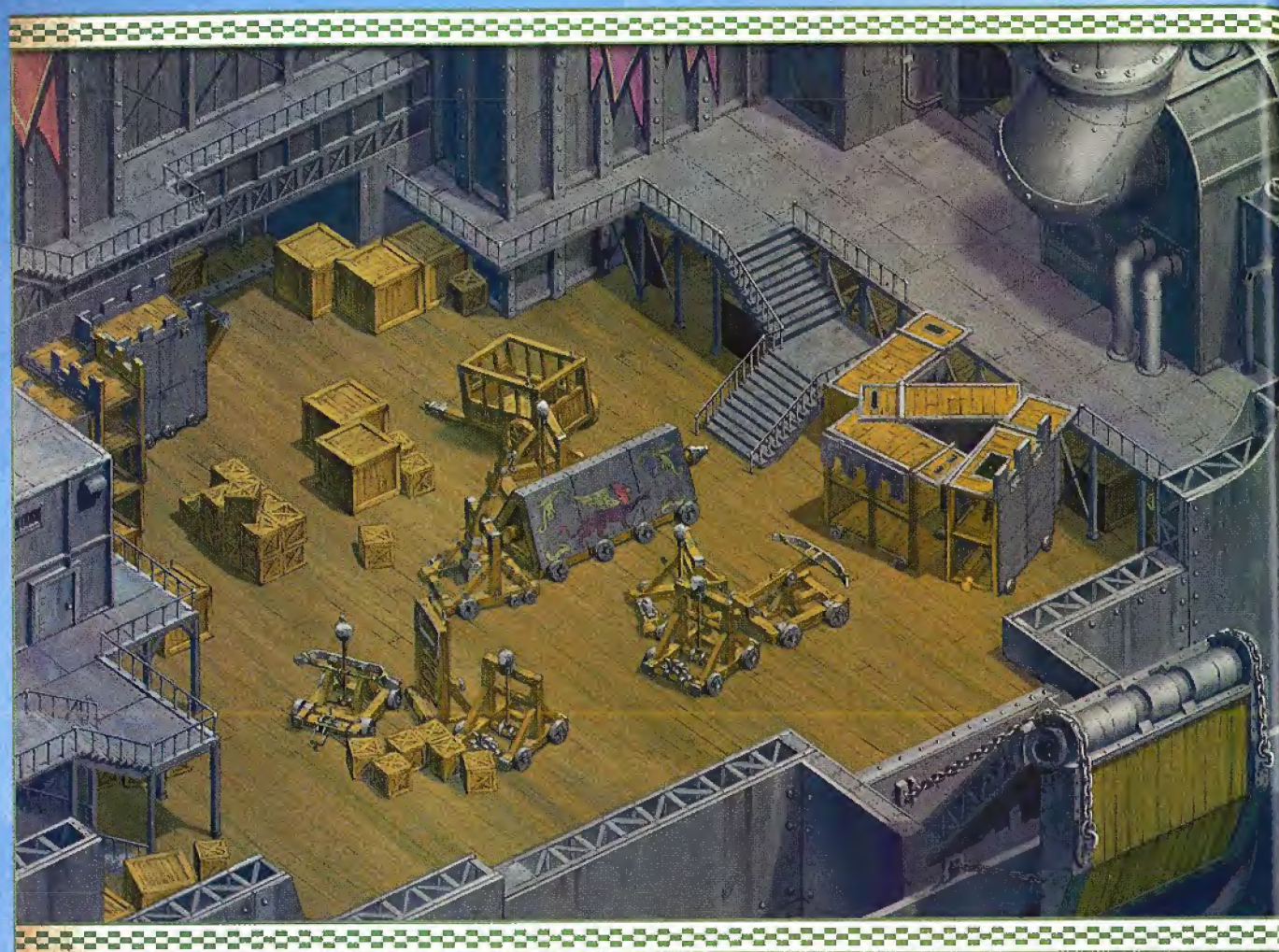
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FOURTH MAP



10 x Lizard Warrior Squads (w/ Crocodile Men Leaders)



6 x Demon Hunter Squads (w/ Shadow Sniper Leaders)

After the Holy Knight is defeated, Xion pleads the case of Shildia. There is some honor in the ranks of his foes, and much can still be done to save the nations from ruin. As a bit of a surprise, there is a final duel to make before the mission is complete. Xion can retreat to save and grab additional healing items, should they be needed. Your foe deals a substantial amount of melee damage, and the duel itself is not terribly easy unless you are quite fast to react.



Run in a circle around this extra Boss and let him make the initial moves with each strike. Run forward after he is dedicated to an attack and slice with Thousand Thrust at the area where your foe originated the attack; he jumps back into your attacks. This time, the Boss has a more powerful circle attack that he makes as well. Use moves from greater range to counter that.

Although Cheiron didn't drop the usual three treasure chests, this duel ends with a series of three chests and the end of the mission. Note that losing the duel counts as a normal death, meaning the game lets you return to the duel after losing your money and some experience.



Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



15 x Silver Arrow Knight Squads (w/ Silver Bow Knight Leaders)



1 x Holy Knight Boss

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A TURN IN THE WAR

This is a great turning point for Shildia. There are bitter moments in this victory over the invaders, but it seems that there is hope for the great city of Shildia to come out of this war relatively unscathed. However, there is much that needs to be done still. Too much is left unexplained, and that is a danger unto itself.



The Tower of Heaven

Talk to Ryuna and Pios after these missions, and soon enough Xion learns about the Tower of Heaven. This great structure offers several things of importance. For one, there is an optional mission with Ryuna that can be done at this time in the Tower of Heaven. The levels are the same whether you go there normally or in the mission, so there is nothing difficult to contend with.

Even after that Relationship Mission is finished, the party can return to the Tower of Heaven whenever they wish. This Tower is covered more in the final chapter of this guide. There are 60 levels to the structure, and you receive an important collector's item in return for defeating the tower.

It takes nearly a Level 50 character set to finish the Tower of Heaven, so it's not likely to be doable until you play the game again in Advanced Mode and gain levels there. Return to Normal Mode in the future for defeating this special dungeon. For a person with great patience, take on the tower now and use the creatures in the middle tiers of the dungeon to gain levels. This is a slow process, but it is doable.

THE DARK MASK (CAMPAIGN MISSION 14)

- ③ Talk to the citizens of Heroes' Way and finish any shopping
- ③ Return to the Heroes' Hearth and talk to Pios; an important scene follows
- ③ After the scene, enter the Briefing Room and choose "For Liberty" from the missions available
- ③ First Map: Defeat All 8 Leaders
- ③ Second Map: Defeat All 15 Leaders
- ③ Third Map: Defeat All 8 Leaders
- ③ Boss Map: Defeat Visage

Mission Explanation

With the outer sections of Shildia in trouble, your party is called upon to repel the invaders once again. There are Wights, Golems, and Demon Casters in the mix, so Ryuna is a strong choice for the first map, at least. Her healing powers come into great use as well.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



5 x Wight Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)



3 x Golem Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)

Beating the Mission

The first map has a number of modest Squads using Fire-resistance troops and Ice-resistant Leaders. Ryuna helps against both of these, and she is able to Turn Undead and destroy the Wights easily. Clear the lower party of the Blacksmith's Quarters first to give your characters room for continued fighting. If Xion is wielding the Blaze Limiter before entering this series of fights, the route is going to be especially difficult. He does almost no damage to the Golems and the Wights are almost as bad. However, there are so few Squads that it isn't worth changing to another Tier 3 weapon, so abuse the healing items and slug things out if that is the case.

The lower and upper groups of enemies are easier because you can draw them onto the stairs and rely on heavy Thousand Thrust chains to pile up the dead. Bring Ryuna in to Turn the Wights after they have already collapsed.



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SECOND MAP



4 x Ancient Lord Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)



5 x Dark Mage Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)



3 x Icerock Golem Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)

The second map is much easier for Fire-based Xion players. There are Mummy groups in the Promenade that are weak versus Fire, and some of their Leaders are still Blizzard Masters! While Ryuna is still great for this fight, she isn't as direly needed because the Mummy Lords don't Resurrect themselves as quickly as the Wights. In fact, they don't Resurrect at all unless their Squad Leader is still alive.

The other Squads you come across are soft but high on magic damage. These small clusters consist of Dark Mages and Blizzard Masters. Rush forward and use heavy attacks on them as early as possible. If they complete a group of spells, the incoming damage is extremely high. Do not use Turn Undead until the Mages in an area are down, since Link Skills that take a long time leave you too exposed to spells.

When the Leaders are defeated, take the exit in the upper left to reach Wildcat Lane.



Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



4 x Wight Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)



4 x Brover Squads (w/ Blizzard Master Leaders)

The third fight is a painful one. Enemies in Wildcat Lane are able to shoot across the various tiers of the level, and that is doubly trying when you see that the Wights and the Brovers have ranged attacks. The Leaders do too, since there are still many Blizzard Masters here. Take on as little as possible without angering Squads that are on different tiers. The Brovers are in heavier armor, but the bodies inside are still Undead, making everything in the level besides the Squad Leaders Undead. Turn them all after Xion defeats the majority of each group.

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BOSS MAP



5 x Brover Squads (w/ Reptilian Leaders)



4 x Lizard Soldier Squads (w/ Reptilian Leaders)



1 x Visage

The final fight of this series takes place in the Birdmen's Village. Visage returns, and this supreme caster is able to deal more magic-based damage than before. He uses the same abilities, but the fight is



harder because of the Undead in the level and the cramped quarters. Dodging spells is a greater chore, and it takes both luck and timing to pull it all together.

Visage won't engage until you advance to the upper left side of the map. Destroy all of the Brovers and Lizard Squads in the way, and don't leave a single enemy alive; even the dead ones need to die again. This creates a future battle zone for attacking Visage without pesky Squads hassling you. After Ryuna has done her part against the Undead, you have the choice to retreat and swap in a more aggressive melee character in her place. Vicious and fast fighters like Volg and Mao are especially skilled for bringing down Visage, it might be worth the time involved in making said switch.

Visage uses the exact same attacks as when you faced this Boss in the desert. You have an option this time that was unavailable before: a full-on rush. With the attack power of Xion and Volg or Mao, you can rush and defeat Visage before the caster can get off more than a few spells. Use a healing item or two just to be safe, but this method of victory is very fast in comparison to dodging spells and rushing in for short bursts. In the long run, this even saves on healing items unless you become quite skilled at avoiding Visage's spells in this tight area.



Once the dark Boss has been stopped, the flag appears in the lower left part of the map. There are still four Squads of enemy troops on the level, and the treasure that drops from Visage is in chests at the top part of the map.

A number of important events continue after the end of the mission. Watch these, then return to the Heroes' Hearth for a short rest. Finish any duties in town, then move to the Briefing Room for the next event in the series.

ANCIENT SOULS (CAMPAIGN MISSION 15)

- ④ Finish the scene from the previous mission
- ④ Appraise, restock items, and return to the Briefing Room (Select "The Battle for Corleonis")
- ④ First Map: Defeat All 13 Leaders
- ④ Second Map: Use All of the Levers
- ④ Third Map: Slay Over 7 Leaders
- ④ Fourth Map: Defeat the Mechanical Emperor

Mission Explanation

The central palace grounds are in danger of being overrun. Weissritter responds immediately, and your characters are there within moments. There are Orcs all over the place, and these Squads include both grunts and casters. Bring a character for clearing large groups. Though Neige would normally be perfect here, there are many Ice-resistant Orcs in the mix, so she isn't quite as devastating as she might normally be. Mao (with a Fire-based Tanto) or Volg are again great choices here. The new Samurai who has joined the party is also quite adept at destroying these packs of foul beasts.



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Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



7 x 1st Class Orc Squads (w/ Orc Master Leaders)



6 x Orc Major General Squads (w/ Orc Commander Leaders)

Beating the Mission

The first map is quite straightforward; the Squads you face contain either Orc frontliners or Orc casters. Trigger the grunt types and let them come to you, then plow through the ranks while your partner takes them from the side. As with all Orcs, the Squads panic when their Leaders dies, making it easy to mop up the remnants.



Swap Ryuna into your party for the second map. There are many Undead in the dank sewers beneath the castle, and the tight quarters make it impossible to advance comfortably without destroying these creatures entirely. The Brovers continue to use their ranged attacks, so a fast rush against them is the best means of survival.

The Demons with the Brovers are powerful, but they lack an aggressive spirit. As long as Xion pins himself to the Demons and stays on the attack, there isn't much danger of high damage. Having a Fire-based weapon makes the fights against the Demons slow, as they are fire-resistant. However, Ryuna's Elemental Break helps against this, and Charged Single Skills are especially easy to land against these slower Leaders.

Use more caution with the caster groups, because they lose a volley of dangerous magic when Xion first approaches each cluster. This early attack is about all that the Orc Major Generals have, since they fall quickly once you get into their midst.

After the last Leader falls, descend into the hidden passage by taking the flag on the upper left side of the map.



Mission Bestiary

SECOND MAP



9 x Brovers Squads (w/ Demon Leaders)



1 x Demon

Attack the levers throughout the level to open the path toward the upper end of the map. Be cautious while crossing the tiny hallway in the middle of the area. There are many sets of arrow traps in there that fire often; walk slowly at first to avoid these, then rush the Brovers Squad at the end to avoid fighting in the middle of the traps.



Opening the final door takes a bit of legwork. Once the top area is cleared of Brovers and Demons, look for all of the levers, marked by Blue on the map. Clear all the upper levers, return to the lower walkway, by the water, and open the final door with the lever at the right side of that ledge. Leave the level through the doors at the top right, which then open.



Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



1 x Mechanical Emperor Boss

Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



6 x Orc 2nd Lieutenant Squads (w/ Orc Lt. Colonel Leaders)



6 x Lesser Demons

The third map is thick with Orc archers and flying Lesser Demons. You only need to destroy seven of the Leaders on the level to pass through the doors on the right side of the area. Because of the time involved in beating all targets, it's best to knock down the Lesser Demons in passing and only defeat two or three of the Orc Leaders while racing for the far doors.

However, if you wish to get all enemies, retreat and replace Ryuna with a fully prepared Elwyn or Voig. The anti-range capabilities or respective speed of these characters make it easier to deal with the packets of reinforced archers that practically coat the walls of this place.



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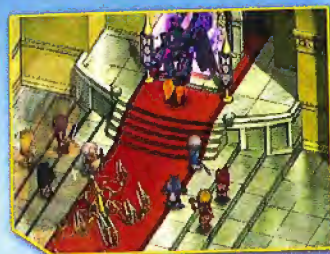
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One of the Emperor's powers is to create a swirling shield of Lightning Spheres. Do not approach during this time; the shield collapses before too long. It's safer to use any ranged attacks at your party's disposal and prepare Charged Single Skills. After settling into his routine, the Emperor uses this once per cycle; after his flying period, the Emperor lands and soon begins to summon the Lightning Spheres.



After the Spheres collapse, the Boss stays in place for a short time and uses his weaker attacks; first, he charges forward while firing missiles at your characters. Run to the side to avoid the missiles, then close in for melee attacks. After a short delay, where you get to launch Single Skills unmolested, he throws his arms toward the closer character and shoots his hands toward that person. This Rocket Punch is easy to avoid with a quick backstep. Return and punish the Emperor with a Single Skill.

When the Emperor takes off and starts to circle, head toward the walls of the room and use them to avoid the rain of bombs that fall. This attack is another one that is better to wait out. You cannot harm the Emperor when he is that high off the ground anyway.



Without a living player to control your partner, it's difficult to keep the Emperor from taking out your buddy. This often occurs during the Lightning Sphere phase; any frontliner must be manually steered away from this, otherwise they rush forward and take it on the chin. Having Ryuna, Elwyn, or Neige avoids this somewhat and is easier if you fight the battle with an AI ally.

The Mechanical Emperor drops high-quality treasure. It's frequently Ring Mail and some of the other equipment from the middle stage of the game that falls here. It takes enough time to reach this Boss that the mission isn't terribly farm-friendly. However, this is still a fitting reward for your hard work against such a well-protected enemy. Plus, this time, he is gone for good!

AFTER THE WAR, A DARK CLOUD ON THE HORIZON

This time the war is fully over. All of the remaining leaders of the invading army have been defeated, and there is peace for Shildia once again. Of course, Visage spoke of a great success, even as the power behind the destruction was facing defeat. Perhaps there is a shadow rising even now?

MESSENGER IN BLACK (CAMPAIGN MISSION 16)

- ⑨ Talk to all characters in the Heroes' Hearth; this advanced time through the next day
- ⑨ Watch the scene that follows, then choose "Comrades in Arms" from the Briefing Room when ready for the Mission
- ⑨ First Map: Free 1 person from a cocoon
- ⑨ Second Map: Free 7 people from cocoons
- ⑨ Third Map: Free 3 people from cocoons
- ⑨ Boss Map: Defeat the Mother Creeper

Mission Explanation

The citizens of the city are in even more trouble than before. Not only must you fight the monsters that are boiling forth, but the greater duty is to break citizens free from the cocoons that have trapped them. In the first map there is one such person, but there are many coming after that. All characters are quite suitable for this mission, and the Creepers ahead shall fall before you before long. The Creepers you face are worth quite a bit of experience and should fall quickly. This makes the entire mission lucrative for repeated runs and leveling your characters for the final few challenges of Normal Mode.



Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP



7 x Creeper Squads (w/ Despair Bug Leaders)

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Beating the Mission

The first map is a short one, and there are few enemy Squads guarding the lone captive in the area. Destroy these lighter Creepers and hack at the cocoon on the mid-left side to free the person stuck inside of it. Only seven Squads resist your advance to the top of the area, and they have neither numbers, Hit Points, or powerful leaders.

There are far more targets in the second map. Not only are there over half-a-dozen cocoons, but the Creeper Squads are tougher and more plentiful. The central road leads toward the next section of town; before taking that route, free the people to the left and right.



Only a few, final people are trapped in the third map. The resistances of the Abyss Creepers are not terribly high, so they are fast targets to bring down, but they have higher Hit Points than the earlier Creepers. All of the cocoons are soon opened, but the most important target of the mission is still missing. There is a cave leading deep into the earth, and that is the place you must check. Ignore the smell of the Creepers that belches from it. Your friends need you!

Mission Bestiary

SECOND MAP



12 x Chaos Creeper Squads (w/ Crime Bug Leaders)

The Creepers here are fairly resistant to Fire, but their tight clumps lend themselves to slices from Thousand Thrust. Once all people are free, clear the middle path and move into the next section of city.



Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



10 x Abyss Creeper Squads (w/ Calamity Bug Leaders)

Mission Bestiary

BOSS MAP



1 x Mother Creeper Boss

The Mother Creeper waits in her lair, and she is a sturdy girl. At first, she stays near the front of the lair, letting your characters slice away at her with normal combos and Single Skills. Do damage as quickly as possible, and ignore the light swings she makes with her fore-arms; these attacks deal moderate physical damage, but it costs too much time to dodge the early ones. Instead, deal damage and only step aside when the Mother Creeper pulls back a single arm. When that happens, stay on the far side while continuing the attack; she only has enough flexibility to harm those on one side of her during those swings.



After several total attacks, the Mother withdraws to the rear of the chamber and spits a number of Abyss Creepers from her gaping maw. Rush the little Creepers and try to slam them while staying in range of the Mother so she takes damage simultaneously. Leap back onto the main body of the Mother Creeper after her children fall, and position your partner next to you. Together, the two characters not only inflict grievous wounds, but Xion's Chain value starts to fly upward, increasing the experience award for the mission and greatly improving his damage output.

Continue striking when the Mother Creeper charges her attack. The great white light is intimidating, but it's another move that costs more to dodge. As with her Double-Claw strikes, stand your ground and continue the combos. The beam that ensues pushes your party back to the front of the room and restarts the cycle of attacks.

By going berserk and ignoring defensive actions, you end up finishing the fight much sooner and avoiding many of the attacks that would have been hard to dodge anyway. An especially driven player may enjoy drawing out the fight in the name of a perfect run. If that is the case, use the edges of the cavern to avoid these attacks. Rush to the back to avoid the Double Claw and use the side edges when the Light Beam is fired.

When the Creeper Mother is felled, her hostage is released, and the party is given a glimpse of important things. This drives the group into the next mission.



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THE FORCES OF LIGHT (CAMPAIGN MISSION 17)

- ③ Save, grab all possible healing and restorative items, and enter the Briefing Room
- ③ Select "Conflict with the Light" and begin a very long and rigorous mission
- ③ First Map: Defeat the Black Paladin
- ③ Second Map: Defeat the Black Bowrider
- ③ Third Map: Defeat Balarha
- ③ Fourth Map: Defeat General Byakko
- ③ Fifth Map: Defeat General Vakka
- ③ Sixth Map: Defeat Dyne, The Black Shield
- ③ Boss Map: Defeat King Diocles

Mission Explanation

This is not a battle that your people asked for, but it is one that must be fought at all costs. Not only are there many waves of troops between the party and your destination, but there are multiple Bosses prepared to stop you. It is difficult to accomplish all of these goals without retreating once or twice, so players with the urge for perfection must get all of the store items and new equipment possible before starting. All characters are of high value in this Campaign Mission, but your favorite ally for defeating Bosses makes for a wise decision.



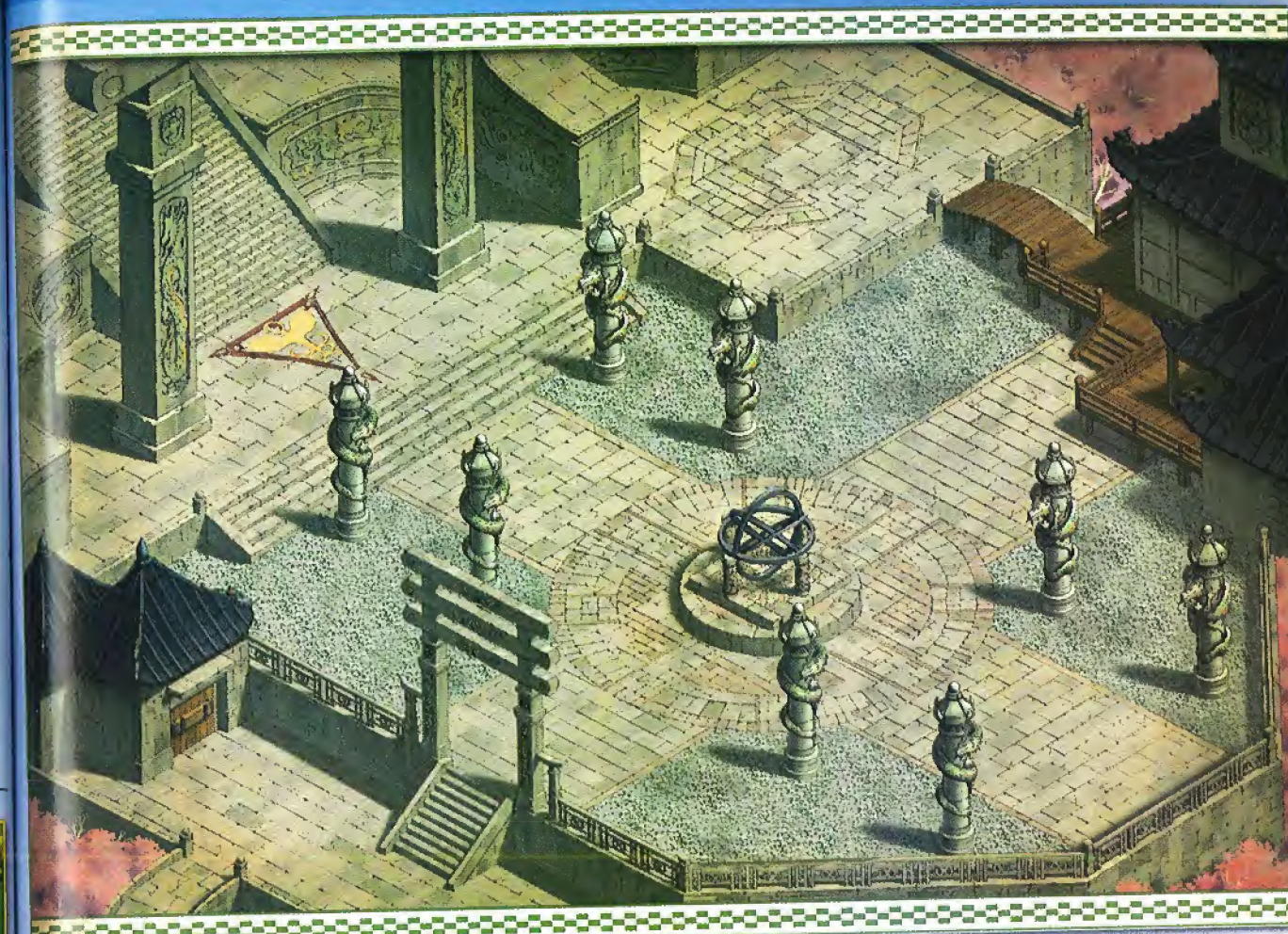
Mission Bestiary

FIRST MAP

- 18 x Black Knight Squads (w/ Black Paladin Leaders)
- 6 x Angel

Beating the Mission

The plains to the east once again become a meat grinder for those who stand against Shildia and Weissritter. The only Paladin you need waits on the right side of the map, but there are many Squads of Centaurs ready to stop your advance. Approach the Centaurs to draw them forward, then lure the fools into Link Skill traps with your partner to wipe out large numbers of them without using many of your items. This is worth handsome sum of experience as well.



Mission Bestiary

SECOND MAP

- 7 x Beast Hunter Squads (w/ Black Bowrider Leaders)
- 7 x Sword Beastmen Squads (w/ Black Bowrider Leaders)
- 2 x Virtue

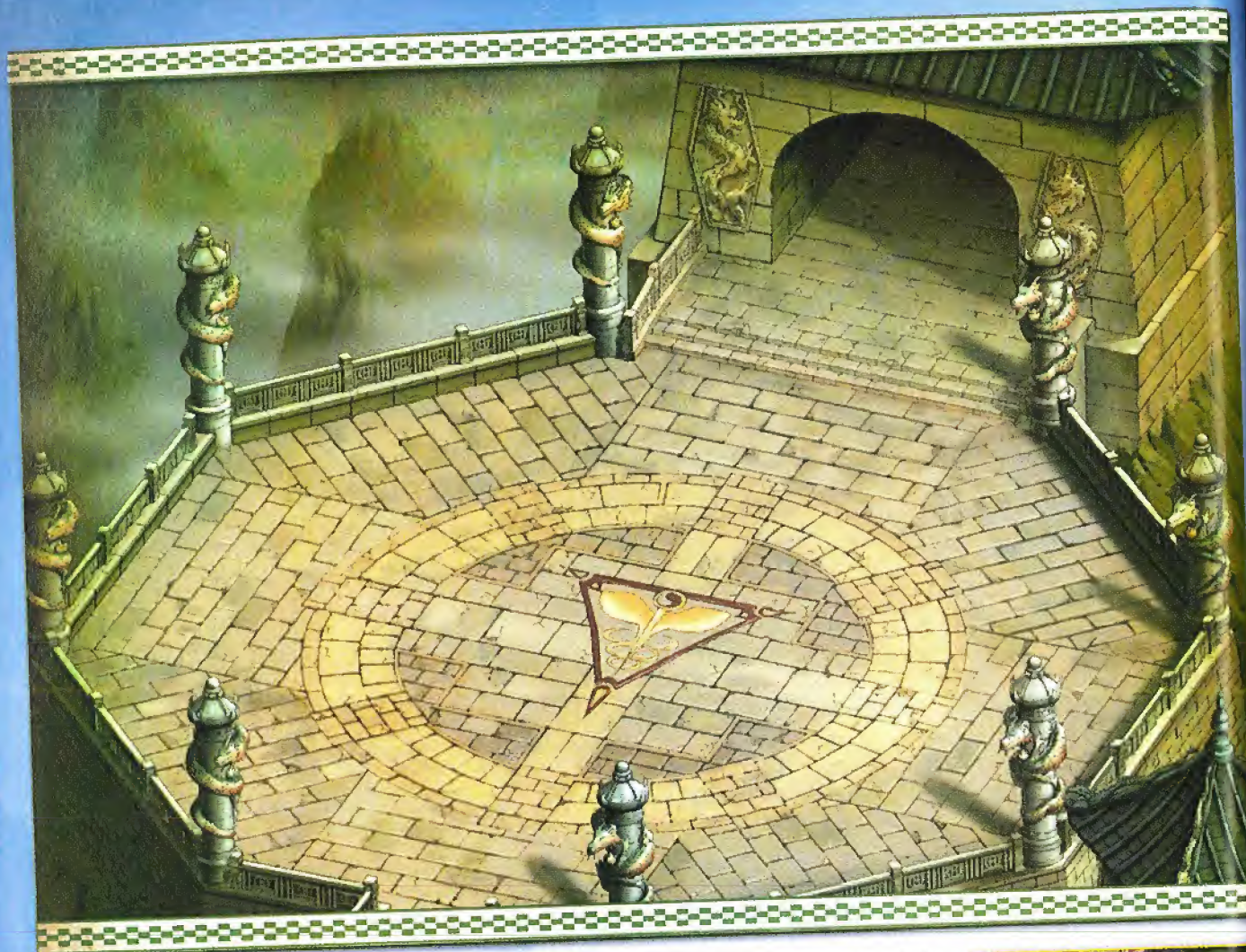


The few Angels in the level are often alone, but give them as much respect as possible. Indeed, these foes are more ominous than entire groups of Centaur. The reason is the high Magic rating of Angels; their spells do immense Fire damage. If your resistance is low, a single casting could do enough to polish off one of your wounded characters. Stay alert and try to lure Angels into casting worthlessly while you are mobile and can rush out of the way. Use your partner during this time to approach the Angels from the back and introduce them to destruction.

It's snowing by the time you reach the next area. There are many foot troops and archers ready to stop you while entering the castle grounds. The Sword Beastmen are slow enough to be of a lesser concern, despite their Hit Points. Instead, it's the Beast Hunters that worry most players. These archers are fast, avoid direct combat when possible, and come in fair numbers. When possible, hit these Squads immediately, while they are still clumped. Otherwise, create a pincer and limit the escape possibilities of the Beast Hunters.

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THIRD MAP



6 x Spear Beastmen (w/ Beast Commander Leaders)



2 x Virtue



1 x Balarha Boss

There aren't many Virtues (the Angels here) on the field, but they are decidedly powerful, even compared to their allies from the previous fight. Do not let the Virtues catch you unaware, because a single attack often deals massive damage.

The Bowrider needed to exit the level is on the left flank. Destroy the Squads there and pass through as soon as your group starts to weaken. This gets as much experience as possible without using those precious supplies of healing items.



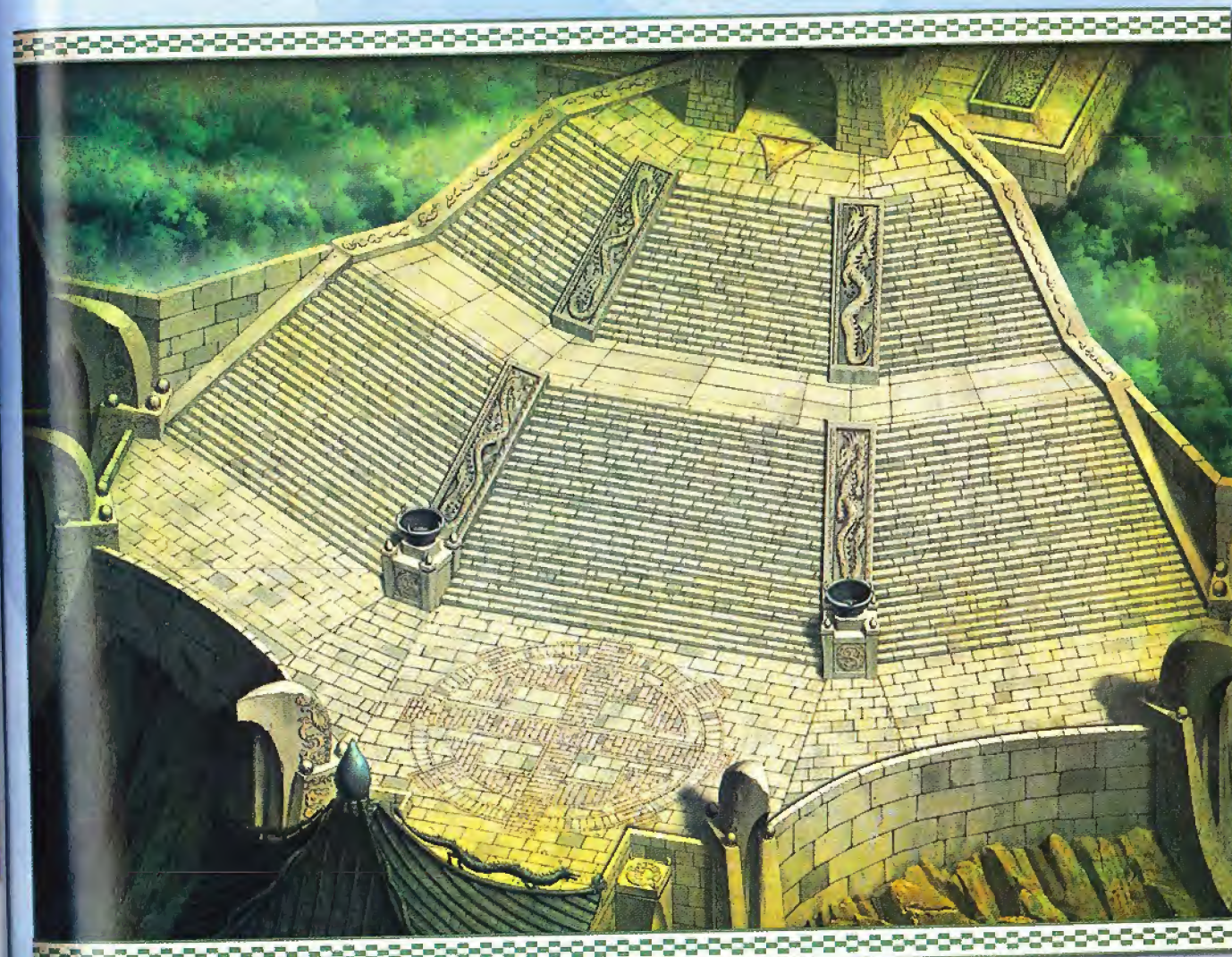
General Balarha is already on the map when you begin, but it's possible to clear some of the enemy Squads before he fully engages your party. Pull the Spearmen toward your group and fight them in the tighter area near the entrance of the map. This gives the large group less potential to overbear Xion and his partner. Once those two Squads are down, advance to the center of the small map and prepare for Balarha himself; there are also a few more Squads of Spearmen and two Virtues that enter the fray. Before focusing on the General, use Link Skills to destroy this massive rush of forces.

Once the crowd has thinned, watch Balarha to learn about his attacks. This General uses Lightning powers, and his melee potential isn't weak by any means. At range, Balarha throws his halberd, which sets off a swirling Lightning Storm. Avoid this entirely by running away. Once the General closes to melee range, he resorts to lunges and normal swings. While he deals fair damage, this is better than playing a hit-



and-run game. Position Xion and his partner on opposite sides of the Boss and attack quickly. This raises your Chain value and soon eats through the Balarha's substantial spread of Hit Points and Defense.

The next map has considerable potential for problems. The Lightning-based Seraphs lead large Squads of flying Crow Knights. If either of your characters rush headlong into these, it quickly becomes an uncontrollable melee, as reinforcements add from nearby Squads. Although time-consuming, safe players should draw the Crow Knights forward and destroy the entire flock before moving deeper into the level.



Mission Bestiary

FOURTH MAP



10 x Crow Knight Squads (w/ Seraph Leaders)



1 x General Byakko Boss

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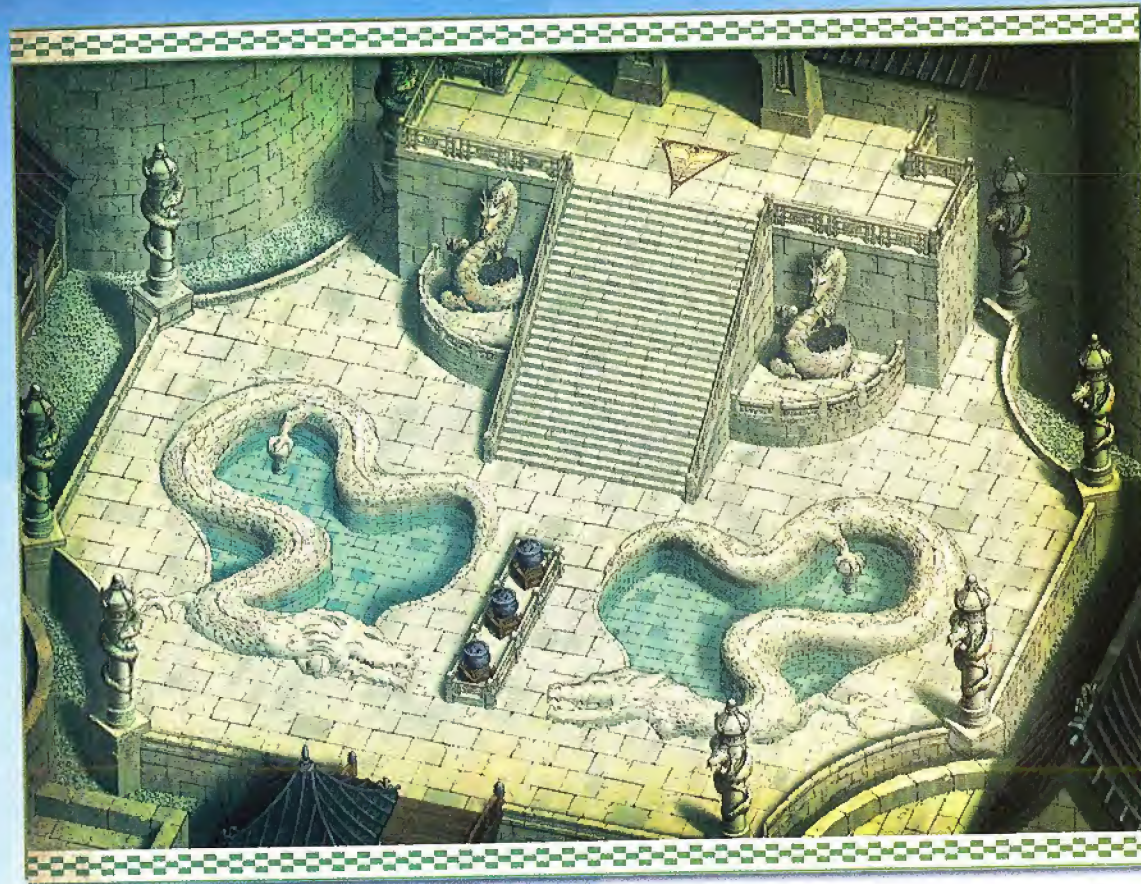
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FIFTH MAP

-  4 x Master Ninken Squads (w/ Saiga Ninja Leaders)
-  3 x Black Lion Squads (w/ Saiga Ninja Leaders)
-  2 x Dominion
-  1 x General Vakka Boss

Once Byakko leaps (literally) into the fray, withdraw to the entrance of the level and destroy any of the lesser foes that follow. This isolates the new General, and he is easy to kill once that happens. Byakko has a simple routine: he leaps back and forth, dealing immense physical damage to anything that gets in his way. The rub for him is that he has some down time between leaps. Your goal is to trigger his attacks and pull back. After that, rush to strike him after each leap, then rush away after your quick combo. This is slow, but

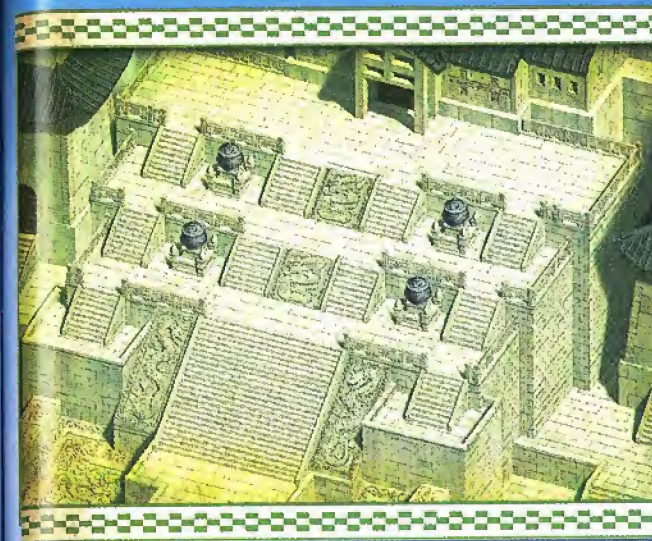
it saves you from using many healing items. Each double swipe from the General does enough damage to cut characters down to moderate or even poor health.

Once Byakko falls, rush the flag at the top of the steps. The Crow Knights aren't worth the immense tip and frustration of getting every single target. It's much more fun to slay the large ranks of Centaur and ground troops found elsewhere in this mission.



The fifth map has an easier set of enemy Squads (by a slight margin), but the Boss here is powerful indeed. You are given fewer options in the Boss battle; rushing is quite dangerous, but Vakka has a Shuriken Throw that is unbeatable in terms of range and speed. You have absolutely nothing that counters this type of range, so you must rely on a close battle.

The lower half of the map can be cleared without grabbing Vakka's attention. Do this, then rush up the middle stairs and start to kill henchmen as quickly as possible. Draw them back while fighting.



Vakka follows, but keeping him on the move slows his Shuriken Throws. Stay moving until all of the lesser Ninja and Hounds that come with Vakka are silenced.



With Vakka clear and alone, the worst bit of the fight begins. If you close with Vakka, he starts to use a Spin Shuriken attack that does awful damage to everything nearby; it's too much to handle. To avoid this, come in and out with your attacks. Move away from Vakka to trigger his long-range Shuriken Throw then rush in to combo him while the weapon spins away uselessly. This is an easy trick to dodge and attack. The only damage you take comes when Vakka Blinks and hits you on the way back onto the screen. Without a human player, it's too difficult to coordinate this with an AI partner. Let your ally fall, and use a Soul Return after the battle is over to keep from upsetting your good friend.



It seems surprising, but this stage—the last full map before the end of the mission—is much easier than its predecessor. Both the Squads of Ebontaur and Dyne are far less devouring than Vakka and his cohort. The Ebontaur are a tad slow and have no response to ranged attacks. Link Skills and even Single Skills clear these foes at high speed. You are free to roam about the entire level and destroy all of these Squads without Dyne getting into the action; he is at the top of the stairs but doesn't move quickly unless you go directly into his line of sight. Wait to do this until all foes are clear.

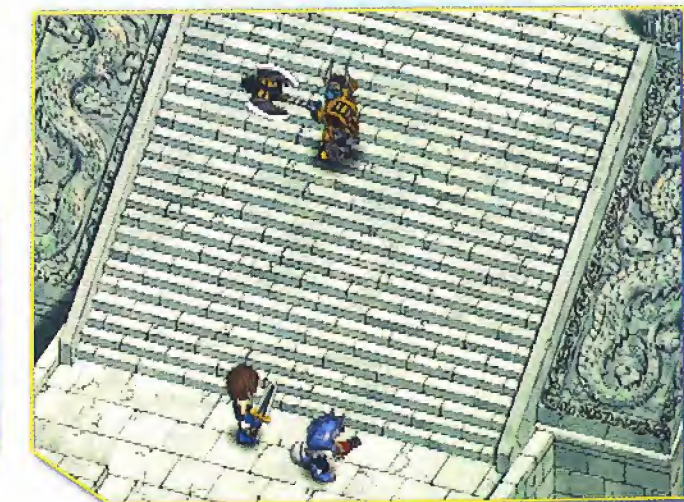
Mission Bestiary

SIXTH MAP

-  15 x Ebontaur Squads (w/ Beast Commander Leaders)
-  1 x Dyne Boss

Dyne has a powerful Bull Rush that does high physical damage. However, he is a bit of a one trick pony once you master avoiding this. Take a few shots, position your partner in front of Dyne and Xion to the side, and apply maximum pressure. Your partner receives the brunt of the damage, but Dyne won't last for more than a few passes. After all that the party has already been through, it's good to have an easy run for a change.

Of course, the last Boss won't be a pushover in any sense. Unworried inside the temple is the King of the opposing force. He has quite a few things to discuss with your allies, but nothing in these parts comes without a fight. Diocles has several special moves, and all of them cover a wide area without a huge delay. Surviving in this fight takes speed, healing items, and as much Fire resistance as you can pile onto your characters. Fire weapons are quite a liability in this fight, since Diocles can resist them without breaking a sweat.



It may sound insane at first, but your party must take Diocles on at close range to survive. That fiery sword is impressive, to say the least, yet the King's true powers are revealed at range. Diocles can lunge at medium range, swiping across the screen while he does so; this inflicts massive damage and is difficult to avoid. The King can also throw a Fire Gout from his weapon. While fast, this is a tad less accurate.

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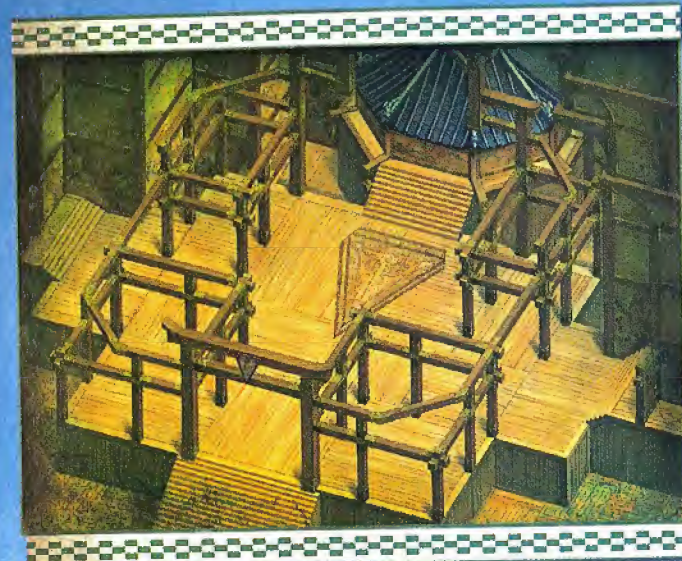
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BOSS MAP



1 x King Diocles

All of that is negated by engaging Diocles directly. The King is not a coward, and won't run away at all; he stands his ground and does single slashes at a slow pace. These hit both of your characters if they aren't positioned perfectly, but the damage done is trivial compared to Diocles' special abilities. Raise your Chain value as quickly as possible, and use that to overpower the King's Defense. It won't take nearly as long to stop this Beastman Boss as it seems using this method, and it's far easier to save your partner's life as well, since there isn't as much repositioning required as with a more mobile technique.



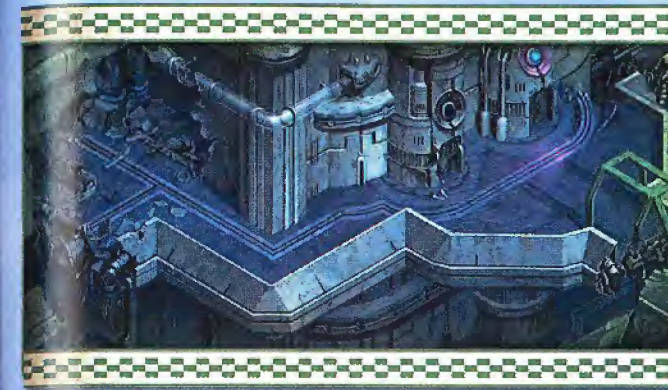
There is much to see and discuss when the fighting ends. Your group is now ready to begin the final assault. Failure means the end of Shildia, and success won't be easy.

LEGACY OF THE GODS (CAMPAIGN MISSION 18)

- ③ Gather items in town again and check for upgrades
- ③ Enter the Briefing Room and select "Sealing the Behemoth"
- ③ First Map: Defeat all 4 Leaders
- ③ Second Map: Destroy 1 Generator
- ③ Third Map: Destroy 3 Generators
- ③ Fourth Map: Destroy the Brover mkII
- ③ Fifth Map: Destroy 3 Generators
- ③ Sixth Map: Defeat a Red Alert
- ③ Seventh Map: Defeat over 6 Leaders
- ③ Eighth Map: Defeat the Brovers
- ③ Ninth Map: Defeat the Colossus S by the door
- ③ Tenth Map: Defeat the Fire Dragon
- ③ Eleventh Map: Defeat all Leaders (3 Stages)
- ③ Twelfth Map: Defeat the Ice Dragon
- ③ Thirteenth Map: Defeat all Leaders (3 Stages)
- ③ Boss Map: Save Shildia

Mission Explanation

Short of the Tower of Heaven, this is the longest single Mission in the game. There are many levels between your party and the climactic battle against a greater power of evil, and the process requires teamwork. Retreating every few levels is perfectly sound because it allows you to Save and gather partners that are perfectly suited for the more difficult maps. If you want to try a straight run, Ryuna is a good and even choice. There are Undead, Biomons, and various machines on the path ahead, with all forms of defenses and resistances.



Mission Bestiary

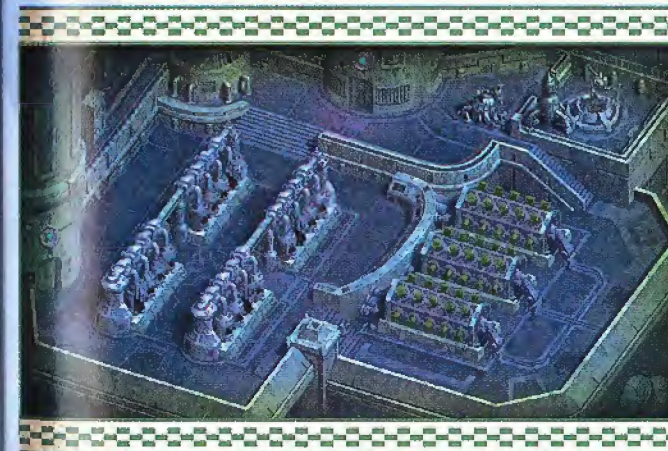
FIRST MAP



1 x Abyss Creeper Squads (w/ Calamity Bug Leaders)



3 x Torch Eye Squads (w/ Ancient Hunter Leaders)



Mission Bestiary

THIRD MAP



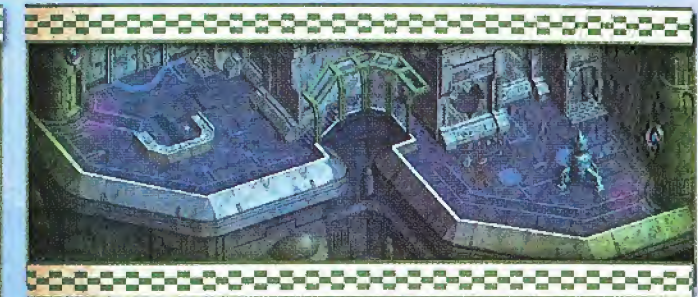
8 x Warning Eye Squads (w/ Red Alert Leaders)



12 x Biomons Squads (w/ DNA666 Leaders)



3 x Biomons Generators



Mission Bestiary

SECOND MAP



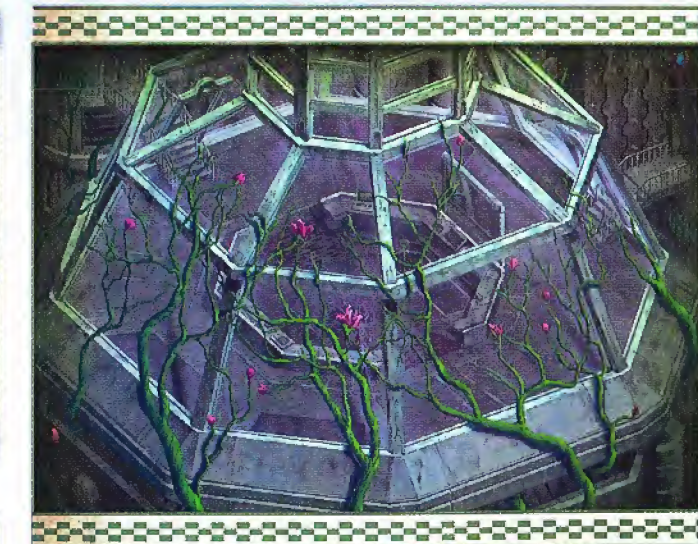
5 x Warning Eye Squads (w/ Red Alert Leaders)



3 x Biomons Squads (w/ DNA666 Leaders)



1 x Biomons Generator



Mission Bestiary

FOURTH MAP



1 x Brover mkII Sub Boss

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FIFTH MAP

- 6 x Biocreature Squads (w/ Experiment #17 Leaders)
- 6 x Biocreature Squads (w/ Red Alert Leaders)
- 3 x Biocreature Generators



Mission Bestiary

SEVENTH MAP

- 12 x Colossus Type R Squads (w/ Colossus Brain S Leaders)
- 8 x Strict Eye Squads (w/ Inspector Leaders)



Mission Bestiary

SIXTH MAP

- 1 x Warning Eye Squad (w/ Red Alert Leader)



Mission Bestiary

EIGHTH MAP

- 30 x Burst Gizmo
- 20 x Brover



Mission Bestiary

NINTH MAP

- 16 x Colossus S Squads (w/ Colossus S Leaders)



Mission Bestiary

TENTH MAP

- 10 x Strict Eye Squads (w/ Inspector Leaders)
- 1 x Fire Dragon



Mission Bestiary

ELEVENTH MAP

- 7 x Biocreature Squads (w/ Experiment #17 Leaders)
- 7 x Strict Eye Squads (w/ Inspector Leaders)
- 7 x Mecha Skeleton Squads (w/ Greater Demon Leaders)



Mission Bestiary

TWELFTH MAP

- 10 x Strict Eye Squads (w/ Inspector Leaders)
- 1 x Ice Dragon

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WITH
DANGER

Global
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Extras





Mission Bestiary

THIRTEENTH MAP



7 x Colossus S Squads (w/ Colossus Brain V Leaders)



7 x Stone Golem Squads (w/ Greater Demon Leaders)



7 x Bioreoid Squads



Mission Bestiary

FOURTEENTH MAP



1 x Last Boss

Beating the Mission

The first area is a passageway that is poorly guarded. A single squad of Abyss Creepers made its way down here, but they fall almost without a fight. After that, it's a battle against the mechanized Eye Torches that are a common type of defender in this region. These machines must charge before firing, but they come in groups and can cover a wide area with damage. Be aggressive with the Eyes, and pull back after releasing Charged Single Skills or Link Skills to avoid their response.

In the next chamber, there are moderate Squads of Warning Eyes and Biomonsters. The Warning Eyes are similar to what you just faced, though they are heavily Fire-resistant. The Biomonsters, on the other hand, are new. These creatures are somewhat tough, but not overly damaging on their own. It is the toxin that the Biomonsters carry and the poison left behind on the floor after their deaths, that is the danger, and is hard to avoid in big battles. The left side of this map is easy to clear, but the Generator on the right creates large Biomonster Squads with fair speed. Use area-of-effect attacks to damage the Generator while destroying its creations.



More Biomonster Generators are functioning as you enter the first large room of the labs. There are more Warning Eyes here, and the quantity of Biomonsters has improved as well. All three of the Generators you need to destroy are on the left side of the map (and the exit appears there too), so clearing the right half is only needed for experience and extra funds. Ice and Lightning are powerful elements here.

Only a single machine stalks the Monitoring Room that covers the fourth map. With Ryuna in tow, the fight is quite short. Knock down the Undead machine quickly with a set of Thousand Thrusts and a quick combo, then Turn Undead. For other pairs, you are required to knock the Brover down several times before it is finally destroyed.



Terrarium B has three more Generators to destroy. The Biomonsters in this area are designated as Biocreatures, and they are all resistant to Fire, as are the Red Alerts that appear with them. Bring a character with an Ice-based weapon or series of attacks, such as Neige. Two of the Generators are near the front, and the third is in the lower-right corner of the area. Wade through the enemies to reach these Generators and get them down as soon as possible. For a fast exit after that, backtrack to the left side of the map and move to the top from there. Avoid several Squads that cover the upper-right side.

A huge Squad of Warning Eyes is prepared to ambush your party in a Ruined Monitoring Room past that door. While somewhat resistant to Fire, the Warning Eyes aren't as bad as the Biocreatures, so this fight doesn't require a full-on Ice assault. Pound the massive group with area-of-effect attacks and watch the herd quickly thin. Once the numbers are low, fight the Red Alert normally and exit via the door on the right. This leads out to a Skyway.



The Skyway is filled with machines, and the Colossus-type Squads are some of the worst that you are meant to face. These flying machines are like cats; they may not have all nine lives, but it almost feels like it when you are fighting them. After destroying the central body of a Colossus, the head-section pops off and tries to ram you. Damage that, and it vibrates for a while before detonating, and doing a fair sum of damage to your party if they are close. Attack the wounded heads to destroy them before they finish their death cycle.

Fight through the groups of enemies on the left for a fast exit. Only six Squad Leaders need to be destroyed to open the exit, and you need to defeat about that many just to get a feel for the level anyway.

On the far side of the Skyway is a Marine Biolab. This area has a simple layout, but the creatures there have hidden dangers. The Burst Gizmos aren't like the Vaporous Creatures Xion has fought before. These versions have a self-destruct ability that is very powerful; the Gizmos start to glow after taking a bit of damage, then a timer begins before they are able to detonate. Use all available damage from both characters to destroy the Gizmos quickly. Pull two at a time from the marine pods you walk across, and clear them in this fashion.

The only enemy you actually need to destroy in the Marine Biolab here is a Brover on the upper-right side. If you wish, run through the rest of the level to reach this enemy and bypass some of these fights.



Another Marine Biolab follows, this time stuffed full with Colossus machines, led by more Colossus S. These foes are awful for experience, when you compare them to fast and simple victories against Creepers, Biomonsters, and so forth. Thus, unless you seek a full victory, race across this level at full speed. This involved moving left, down, all the way to the left, then up that side; the only Colossus you must defeat is in the upper left, and it doesn't have any special bonuses or power. Avoiding all of the conflict saves an amazing amount of time and healing items.



Level 40

While most characters won't reach Level 40 until played in Advanced Mode, there is enough fighting around for Xion to hit that critical mark if you choose. Play a number of the final areas of the game multiple times to reach this and get a final weapon upgrade if this dungeon starts to become troublesome.

This technique is again a lifesaver in the next map. Before reaching the Giant Elevator, you are placed against a number of Strict Eye Squads and a Fire Dragon. There are Fire-breathing statues all

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around the level, and it's more than a bit of a problem to clear every Squad as you push your way to the right. Instead, run past the slow Strict Eyes; they won't really follow, and the statues don't move at all. Next, climb the stairs to reach the Dragon's area. Only a single Squad and some statues are up there with the Fire Dragon; clear one statue and the Squad of Strict Eyes, then use Lightning and Ice attacks to rip the Dragon apart.



It may have been fun passing through the previous levels while dodging the enemy troops, but the Giant Elevator puts an end to that for a while. All of the Bio creatures on the lift must be destroyed! Lazarus is an unbeatable choice for doing all this; the Draconian can Spiral quite easily in the open space of the lift, and these Squads are helpless against it! That, combined with the heavy armor Lazarus wears, make him more than suitable for this series of melee skirmishes.

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As soon as the seventh Leader of the Bio creature Squads dies (at least, as soon as his acid pool disappears), more creatures board the Giant Elevator. You must fight seven Squads of Strict Eyes. Fire works quite well here, and Lazarus still serves his function.

When the final Inspector dies, seven Squads of Mecha Skeletons and Greater Demons plod onto the Giant Elevator. It's getting a bit cramped on there with all the bodies, but that is the price for a fast trip down. Both the Demons and the Skeletons attack for high damage; starting with all of the Squads around you doesn't help that either. Briefly seek shelter against the wall of the lift and let the enemies consolidate while moving on your position. While it may be painful, use that clumping to hit many targets at once. Focus everything you have on taking down those Demons.



It's back to the Energy Furnace for another hectic run. This time, the statues of the area blow Ice everywhere, and there is an Ice Dragon at the end of the line. Use the same tactic of running around the Strict Eyes and statues to avoid being bogged down. This time, there are two Squads of Strict Eyes up by the Dragon. Have more patience, and clear a larger space by killing two of the four statues up top. This adds enough room to destroy the Strict Eyes and wait for the Dragon to come to you. Once the great beast falls, exit the chamber.

Another Elevator is beyond the second Energy Furnace, but this one is tainted. There are more enemies to defeat before it reaches the bottom. There are two ways to survive the Colossus rush that marks the first stage of this fight: either get to a corner and slowly fight one Squad of the Colossus machines at a time (the sane way); or, use Summons and Link Skills to take on major groups of these enemies at the same time (costly on healing items, but much faster and kind of exhilarating).

When the first waves falls, seven groups of Stone Golems and Greater Demons enter the Elevator. Fire is the key to destroying this group and Lightning resistance doesn't hurt, since the Golems spray Lightning from time to time. Circle around the edges of the map while whittling down the Golems, and keep doing this until all of the enemies are in a sing squad. Dart in and out using Single Skills to kill various members without exposing yourself. This is a faster technique than it would have been for the Colossus machines because the Golems and Demons die so quickly, as long as you have the Fire to make things count. Mao is a very strong ally here.



The third rush is dramatic; a new breed of Biomons (Bioroids) come onto the Elevator in frightening numbers. There is no way to easily rush for safety, so it's a fight from the first second onward. Guardian Summons, and other major abilities that are somewhat inefficient for normal use, are good just to get you some breathing

room and a moment to think. Work the enemies away from the starting spot, that way they won't be close if the party needs to retreat and come back.



After using a number of Link Skills, healing items, and running around, the Bioroids collapse into puddles and leave you by the final exit. Touch that flag to trigger the last battle of the game. Before doing that, consider restocking and Saving your game.

The Mini-Map is a lifesaver in this battle. Although the primary head of the last boss stays right where you want it, there are many smaller heads that come onto the scene for loose elemental magic or attack directly. You can see yellow blips on the map before these arrive, so it's much easier to know which side of the creature to avoid.

The smaller, serpent heads have all three types of elemental damage. Equip an accessory to resist all forms of damage from elements. That makes such a difference that it's worth giving up extra damage, Hit Points, or whatever else your previous accessory was adding. This fight is all about resistances.



Once the great foe is moderately wounded, the attacks increase in intensity. Instead of sending one head at a time, the beast often has one on its way from each side without great delay in between. Also, the central head gains the ability to make two attacks. The first is a simple chomp—the head rears back and bites forward. Damage from the chomp is quite low, yet a shadowy glow signals the other strike. This move throws a huge sphere of energy down from the beast, wounding and poisoning all that it touches. Avoid that by moving all the way to the edge of the arms.

The way to defeat this enemy is quite different if you have an AI ally, compared to a human player. With the AI, a flat out rush against the central head is your best ploy. Take the two sides and unleash maximum damage Charge Attacks with your Single Skills. Use healing items as soon as you take damage, and ignore the incoming serpent heads. This kills your foe quickly, but is inelegant and uses several healing items.

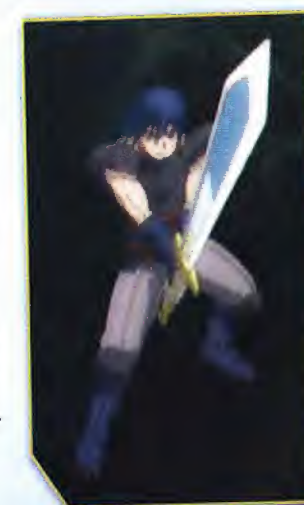
The more difficult but exciting method is to use two players and destroy the serpent heads. Have one person stand to each side and walk up and down the area, triggering the attack heads but moving out of the way before they arrive. Destroy these heads with Single Skills and continue to do so until all three heads, from each side, are gone. Next, attack the central head with impunity. It takes long enough for the lesser heads to regenerate that the main body is doomed! This requires two players to be completely effective because it takes too long to be worthwhile when one person has to sever all six serpent heads.



A Final, Dastardly Tactic

Although all of the characters are quite good, it is clear that Lazarus is made of greater stuff. Even in this daunting battle, he has a technique that is so good that it just isn't fair. Place Xion on the left side of the main head and Lazarus on the right, then trigger Dragon Spiral. Lazarus can't get to Xion, so he repeatedly slams into the enemy's head for the full duration of the move. Repeat this two or three times and pity the great beast for messing with a Draconian.

You've done it! Shildia is safe, Advanced Mode is unlocked, and the Tower of Heaven waits for your future victories. The ending you receive at this point is based on your relationships with the other characters. Xion's closest friend gets a private scene with the hero. This is likely to be the person who you've played most often, as a partner. Yet, several decisions made during pivotal moments and the number of times your allies have fallen in battle can change this final tally. Repeat the game many times to see these various endings and to get a better understanding of what each character provides.



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GLOBAL BESTIARY

This Bestiary explains the dangers posed by the monster families in *Shining Tears*. Read this chapter to learn the strengths and weaknesses of the major monster types; understanding this makes it much easier to decide what equipment and tactics to use in a given battle.

GELATINOUS LIFEFORMS

NORMAL MODE															ADVANCED MODE												
#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt				
001	Paste	1	31	Seductive Perfume		14	10	8	7	1	6	22	44	45	448	90	72	84	31	45	30	52	53				
002	Dark Paste	48	97	Seductive Perfume		660	158	127	153	48	62	30	59	60	2772	354	284	344	114	128	38	67	68				
003	Poison Paste	15	48	Antidote		150	49	45	48	15	29	25	50	50	924	158	127	151	48	62	33	58	58				
004	Slug Paste	17	51	Seductive Perfume		170	55	48	53	17	31	25	51	51	1008	170	136	163	51	65	33	59	59				
005	Red Gel	4	34	Holy Water		46	16	24	18	4	19	63	25	26	532	102	90	100	34	55	71	33	34				
006	Blue Gel	52	103	Holy Water		740	174	140	168	52	66	12	95	44	3108	378	311	374	126	147	24	95	56				
007	Purple Gel	19	54	Antidote		195	61	58	61	19	40	26	51	52	1092	182	154	179	54	75	34	59	60				
008	Yellow Gel	21	57	Holy Water		215	67	61	66	21	42	6	32	93	1176	194	164	191	57	78	17	43	95				

These Pastes have high magic and attack, but fall to a determined assault. They come in large groups, usually with elemental-based Squad Leader, and aggressively move toward your characters. With low Accuracy and Evasion, they have a tendency to miss their targets and are easily hit by your character's attacks. For best results, focus your attacks at the center of the group and assault numbers of your enemies at once with multi-hit attacks (e.g., Thousand Thrust). This should be enough to destroy the Squad Leader of the group; the remnants of the enemy formation can be defeated at your leisure.



BATS

NORMAL MODE															ADVANCED MODE																	
#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
009	Giant Bat	3	33	Moon Fragment		23	14	18	11	8	40	35	35	43	353	98	98	83	38	77	43	43	51									
010	Goblin Bat	32	73	Moon Fragment		238	94	94	81	37	76	70	31	48	1137	258	258	227	78	117	78	39	48									
011	Demon Bat	22	58	Moon Fragment		154	70	70	60	27	66	28	67	37	843	198	198	173	63	102	36	75	45									
012	Ogre Bat	13	45	Moon Fragment		91	43	52	39	18	57	26	25	72	588	146	146	126	50	89	34	33	80									
013	Evil Bat	6	36	Moon Fragment		47	22	36	23	11	53	36	36	44	422	110	118	99	41	87	44	44	52									
014	Vampire Bat	36	79	Moon Fragment		299	110	116	99	41	87	71	31	41	1265	282	290	253	84	130	79	39	48									
015	Dark Bat	26	64	Moon Fragment		187	78	84	70	31	77	30	68	38	971	222	230	199	69	115	38	76	46									
016	Slash Bat	17	51	Moon Fragment		124	55	66	51	22	68	27	26	74	716	170	178	153	56	102	35	34	82									

Bats are the lowest tier of flying enemies, but do not underestimate them. Although they have low Accuracy, often missing your characters, many of them have a truly annoying special ability: Paralysis. Because of this, hit-and-run tactics work best against them, playing off against their high miss rate and limiting their opportunity to paralyze.

Focus your attacks at the center of the group, aiming toward the Squad Leader, and Charge your attacks. Hit the center of the group, defeating as many of the Bats as you can as quickly as possible. The rest of the Bats move aside but follow you at a slight distance, allowing you to defeat them or move on to the next fight.

Usually fights involving Bats have the requirements that you Destroy All Leaders. Using these hit-and-run tactics, you can meet this criterion and move on to more groups.

There are some characters, such as Elwyn and the Minstrel, that have anti-aerial abilities. These two are very good partners to take against flying creatures such as Bats.



SPIDERS

NORMAL MODE															ADVANCED MODE											
#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt			
017	G Spider (Adult)	18	52	Antidote		185	58	68	54	26	31	40	40	48	1046	174	174	151	58	66	43	48	56			
018	Pale Spider (Adult)	28	67	Antidote		285	82	88	73	36	41	69	30	39	1466	234	234	205	73	81	77	38	47			
019	Tarantula (Adult)	35	78	Antidote		405	106	112	95	43	48	31	71	40	1774	278	278	245	84	92	39	79	48			
020	Ogre Spider (Adult)	41	87	Antidote		525	130	136	117	49	54	32	32	81	2222	314	314	277	100	108	40	40	89			
021	G Spider (Young)	14	46	Antidote		112	46	54	42	21	41	38	39	47	695	150	150	130	53	73	46	47	55			
022	Pale Spider (Young)	23	60	Antidote		184	72	72	61	30	50	67	29	37	1008	206	206	180	67	87	75	37	45			
023	Tarantula (Young)	31	72	Antidote		256	90	90	78	38	58	30	70	40	1277	254	254	223	79	99	38	78	48			
024	Ogre Spider (Young)	33	75	Antidote		288	98	98	85	40	60	31	31	79	1344	266	266	234	82	102	39	39	87			

Spiders come in groups of one large Squad Leader surrounded by numbers of smaller allies. In battle, the Leaders have the ability to Call Allies to them, increasing the number of tiny Spiders you must fight, and can raise the attack power of their allies. In addition, Spiders have various Poison abilities, which are often more damaging than their attacks.

Hit-and-run tactics are your friends here. Take out the Squad Leader as quickly as possible, to keep them from adding more foes to the group and giving your enemies attack bonuses. After the Squad Leader is defeated, move back a bit and let the tiny Spiders clump. The little Spiders tend to jump out of range when on their own, but in groups they are much easier to defeat. Do low-Charge attacks against the groups of little Spiders and only basic attacks against individuals, so that you don't waste your Skill Points if they jump out of the way.

To combat the Poison abilities of Spiders, invest in Antidotes, especially against the higher levels of Spiders. Without an Antidote, the Poison lingers on your characters, wasting valuable Hit Points or healing items. The last thing that you need is one of your support characters, like Ryuna or the Minstrel, afflicted by strong Poison during a difficult mission.



INSECTS (WORMS)

NORMAL MODE															ADVANCED MODE									
#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	
025	Worm	9	39	Herb		108	31	42	26	9	12	37	37	45	806	122	122	94	29	53	45	45	53	
026	Poison Worm	17	51	Antidote		204	55	60	43	17	21	39	40	48	1209	170	170	133	41	65	47	48	55	
027	Sand Worm	29	69	Herb		348	84	84	65	29	33	43	44	52	1814	242	242	191	59	83	51	52	60	
028	Snake Worm	13	45	Medal of Bounty		161	43	58	38	13	24	38	39	46	1018	145	154	118	35	65	46	47	54	
029	Viper Worm	21	57	Antidote		257	67	74	54	21	32	40	41	50	1421	194	202	157	47	78	48	49	58	
030	Dragon Worm	33	75	Herb		437	98	104	80	33	44	44	44	53	2026	266	274	216	65	96	52	52	61	

These worm-like enemies appear as groups with a slightly stronger Squad Leader. Like many of the lower-level monsters, they have low Accuracy and often miss their attacks. Their most interesting ability, however, is their tendency to burrow underground, shielding themselves from your characters' attacks.

To combat this, start your initial engagement of the enemy group with a high-powered Charge Attack. Because these enemies are fairly weak, your first assault defeats many of them. From there, wait until your foes are in small clumps to make any other low-powered Charge Attacks. Use only basic attacks against individual Insects to conserve your Skill Points and items.

Because many fights against these enemies require you to only defeat their Squad Leaders, consider limiting your assault to only that stipulation. Destroy the Squad Leader using your initial high-powered Charge Attack and then ignore the rest of the Insects, moving on to the next fight.



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VAPOROUS LIFEFORMS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
031	Gizmo	5	35	Pixie Dust		55	19	24	17	10	14	38	38	39	616	106	96	90	40	49	46	46	47
032	Venom Gizmo	17	51	Antidote		187	55	54	48	22	31	42	42	43	1108	170	153	148	56	65	50	50	51
033	Baal Gizmo	24	61	Pixie Dust		264	74	67	63	29	38	44	45	45	1416	210	189	184	66	75	52	53	53
034	Burst Gizmo	40	85	Bomb		550	126	114	110	45	54	48	48	49	2310	306	276	270	95	104	56	56	57
035	Blaze Fog	17	51	Fire Crystal		192	55	60	51	22	38	82	22	23	1118	170	161	153	56	72	90	30	31
036	Freeze Gas	21	57	Unmelting Ice		236	67	68	60	26	42	23	84	24	1303	194	183	174	62	78	31	92	32
037	Spark Cloud	9	39	Tourmaline		104	31	44	32	14	29	19	20	80	749	122	118	109	44	60	27	28	88
038	Mystic Mist	28	67	Unmelting Ice		313	82	80	73	33	49	25	86	26	1611	234	219	210	72	88	34	94	34
039	Dark Smoke	52	103	Tourmaline		819	174	157	153	57	73	30	30	91	3428	378	349	340	131	147	40	40	95

Vaporous Lifeforms are small, roughly circular flying enemies. Because they are flying enemies, they have greater freedom of movement, allowing them to pass over certain obstacles and attack from hard-to-reach places. This gives them an intrinsically higher element of difficulty. To combat this, let these enemies come to you; they are fairly aggressive and move in waves against your characters. Trigger their groups and pull back. Charging your attack as they approach. They invariably end up coming into the path of your attacks, destroying themselves.

Squad Leaders for these enemies may have specific elemental weaknesses and cast elemental attacks like Freeze and Lightning. These spells do not track your characters and take time to cast. So long as you keep moving and let the enemies come to you, the Squad Leaders forgo casting and attacks with the mass to die with the rest.

Partners like Elwyn and the Minstrel are particularly good against flying units such as these Vaporous Lifeforms because of their anti-aerial abilities.

The higher-level Vaporous Lifeforms have the ability to self-destruct. When they take a certain amount of damage, the Lifeform begins to show yellow lightning across its surface. At this point, give it some distance and let it explode on its own; otherwise, it causes modest damage to your characters.



HOUNDS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
040	Hound	1	31	Herb		14	10	10	5	5	12	32	40	39	448	90	90	68	35	51	40	48	47
041	Killhound	33	75	Herb		360	98	98	77	37	53	40	51	50	1680	266	266	211	79	95	48	59	58
042	Ninken	2	32	Beast Fang		21	12	13	7	14	26	32	40	40	429	94	85	71	44	64	40	48	48
043	Ninken-Firetooth	10	40	Beast Fang		90	34	42	30	22	42	60	30	30	630	126	114	97	52	72	68	38	39
044	Ninken-Frostbite	14	46	Beast Fang		126	46	49	38	26	46	22	71	31	782	150	135	117	58	78	30	79	39
045	Ninken-Sparkfang	18	52	Beast Fang		162	58	56	46	30	50	23	33	72	933	174	157	136	64	84	31	41	80
046	Master Ninken	28	67	Beast Fang		252	82	74	63	40	60	59	40	39	1311	234	211	184	79	99	67	48	47
047	Hellhound	4	34	Beast Fang		45	16	28	16	8	25	32	41	41	542	102	110	82	38	61	40	49	49
048	Cerberus	37	81	Beast Fang		445	114	120	92	41	64	40	52	51	1886	290	298	235	86	109	48	60	59

Hounds come in large groups with a slightly stronger Squad Leader. They are low-level enemies without high Hit Points, and they are a cowardly group. When faced with a real challenge, many of them flee. As such, use a high-powered Charge Attack toward the center of the initial group, then rely on only low-powered Charge Attacks against small clumps and basic attacks against individuals.

Because the most common condition for fights with Hounds is to Defeat All Leaders, consider concentrating your attention on the Squad Leader and destroy it with your initial attack. Ignore the rest of the group and simply move on the next fight; only bother with the rest of the group if they make significant trouble for your partner.



DRAGONS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
049	Fire Dragon	37	81	Dragon Scale		2200	136	136	119	47	61	95	10	38	9380	348	348	308	92	106	95	22	50
050	Ice Dragon	38	82	Draconic Amulet	Dragon Scale	2300	141	141	124	48	62	38	69	37	9660	352	352	311	94	108	48	77	45
051	Thunder Dragon	29	69	Dragon Scale		1450	100	100	87	39	53	36	8	95	7560	290	290	255	79	93	48	20	95
052	Mushussu	43	90	Draconic Amulet	Dragon God Armor	2800	165	165	145	53	67	95	11	40	11900	391	391	346	110	124	95	23	52
053	Tiamat	46	94	Draconic Amulet	Dragon God Armor	3100	180	180	159	56	70	39	70	39	13020	410	410	363	118	132	47	78	47
054	Himmeldrache	49	99	Draconic Amulet	Dragon God Armor	3400	194	194	171	59	73	42	12	95	14420	434	434	385	128	142	54	24	95
055	White Dragon	55	108	Draconic Amulet	Dragon God Armor	4000	223	223	197	65	79	61	30	61	16940	477	477	424	146	160	69	38	69
056	Dark Dragon	60	110	Draconic Amulet	Dragon God Armor	7740	267	267	240	70	84	62	31	62	32508	553	553	492	160	174	70	39	70

Dragons are rare and powerful beasts that are powerful on offense. Luckily, their slow movement and lethargic attacks are easy for fast attackers to dodge. The key to destroying a Dragon is to use elemental attacks that exploit the weakness of that creature, since almost all Dragons strongly learn toward one element.

Beyond that, run toward Dragons, launch fast Single Skill attacks, then retreat while preparing for another assault. Dragons constantly try to update their position; this makes it hard for them to get a bead on characters.

The extremely high-level Dragons in Advanced Mode, those found in critical levels of the Tower of Heaven, occasionally drop impressive armor.

DEMON SPELLCASTERS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
057	Dark Mage	23	60	Magestone		207	51	51	73	23	37	84	25	24	1134	145	145	217	60	74	92	33	32
058	Wind Mage	17	51	Magestone		153	39	42	58	17	31	42	43	42	908	119	119	178	51	65	50	51	50
059	Ice Mage	40	85	Magestone		450	89	89	132	40	54	28	89	28	1890	215	215	325	90	104	37	95	37
060	Thunder Mage	39	84	Magestone		432	86	86	127	39	53	28	28	88	1840	212	212	320	88	102	36	37	95
061	Master Mage	8	38	Royal Gown	Magestone	77	20	33	29	8	27	79	20	19	590	83	91	127	38	59	87	28	27
062	Blizzard Master	28	67	Magestone	Wizard Scroll	257	58	64	87	28	49	26	86	26	1321	164	172	252	67	88	34	94	34
063	Lightning Master	24	61	Royal Gown	Wizard Scroll	221	52	58	79	24	45	24	24	85	1170	147	155	226	61	82	32	32	93
064	Tornado Master	44	91	Magestone	Wizard Scroll	527	100	106	152	44	65	49	49	49	2203	231	239	356	102	123	57	57	57
065	Necromancer	43	90	Magestone	Wizard Scroll	509	97	103	148	43	64	48	49	49	2152	229	237	351	100	121	56	57	57
066	Oracle	45	93	Spike	Wizard Scroll	546	103	109	157	45	66	49	49	49	2304	237	245	364	106	127	57	57	57

These Master Mages have high resistances to elemental attacks, including magic, but low attack and defense. What they lack in physical attack, however, they make up for in magic, with damaging spells. These elemental masters are color coded: red for fire, blue for ice, and yellow for lightning.

It is obvious when the Demon Spellcasters begin casting because they glow with a demonic light. The conclusion of their spell is a bolt of their element. It is crucial that your characters disrupt their casting or avoid the spell; especially in Advanced Mode, this is the real damage of the Spellcasters and they are powerful.



Demonic Spellcasters are usually found as Squad Leaders of melee or Undead groups or in small groups of mixed elemental composition. These are some of the most challenging of the early fights due to combined arms and elemental resistances.

Melee and Undead troops work to provide a screen for the Demonic Spellcaster Squad Leader while the caster prepares spells. If the melee/Undead troops are weak, hack through them with a high-powered Charge Attack to engage the caster as quickly as possible; the sooner you defeat the caster the easier the fight becomes. If the support troops are strong, however, pull them forward so that the caster must waste valuable spell-casting time moving rather than focusing on spells. Hit the support troops as you retreat, decreasing as many of their numbers as you can so that you can get to the Spellcaster. Without an effective screen, the caster is a sitting duck to a concerted attack.

Undead troops are difficult because they have the ability to rise again and protect their Squad Leader. Ryuna's Link Ability to Turn Undead is a great blessing here, even though it leaves the group exposed after the spell is completed. For truly strong groups, permanently destroy small clumps of the Undead support troops before moving on to the Spellcaster.

Mixed groups of elemental Demonic Spellcasters are a different problem. The Squad Leader of such a group is always of a different element than the rest of the group, e.g., an Ice Master Mage surrounded by Fire Master Mages. Proper partnership and elemental weapons are important in these situations: You do not want to take Neige against Ice mages when Xion is wielding an Ice-elemental weapon. This highlights that elemental attributes should work to complement each other; that way, the Spellcasters you face will always be weak versus one of your characters.

Melee attacks are also good to use against these groups, especially with fast-moving characters like Mao and Volg. The speed of these characters and their high attack power allow them to cut through these groups with ease and dodge out of the way of any spells that may be cast.

Use an initial high-powered Charge to break into the group as quickly as possible and then hit as many enemies as possible as much as possible. This keeps your enemies disrupted and not casting spells. Any ranged characters should be kept out of spell range while the melee characters wade into the group. With the casters kept occupied, they are limited to only their pathetic melee attacks and can be dispatched.

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RUNE GEIST SOLDIERS (FOOT TROOPS)

NORMAL MODE														ADVANCED MODE									
#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
067	Grunt (Sword)	5	35	Gravity Stone		50	19	28	15	5	14	41	41	33	560	106	116	81	35	49	49	49	41
068	Officer (Sword)	11	42	Gravity Stone		110	37	52	32	11	25	69	30	22	756	134	147	103	42	56	77	38	30
069	Wandering Swordsman	36	79	Gravity Stone		420	110	121	87	36	50	38	77	28	1792	282	310	223	79	93	46	85	36
070	Deserter (Sword)	38	82	Gravity Stone		460	118	129	93	38	52	39	38	67	1932	294	323	233	84	98	47	46	75
071	Bodyguard (Sword)	20	55	Rune Helm	Gravity Stone	200	64	72	50	20	34	47	46	37	1120	186	204	146	55	69	55	54	45
072	Beastman (Sword)	28	67	Black Mail	Black Helm	280	82	90	63	28	42	49	49	40	1456	234	257	184	67	81	57	57	48
073	Grunt (Halberd)	13	45	Gravity Stone		130	43	57	35	13	27	44	44	35	840	146	160	113	45	59	52	52	43
074	Prowler (Halberd)	36	79	Gravity Stone		420	110	121	87	36	50	77	38	28	1792	282	310	223	79	93	85	46	36
075	Wandering Axman	37	81	Gravity Stone		440	114	125	89	37	51	38	77	28	1876	290	319	230	82	96	46	85	36
076	Halberd Master	17	51	Gravity Stone		170	55	66	43	17	31	33	32	62	1008	170	187	133	51	65	41	40	70
077	Bodyguard (Halberd)	20	55	Rune Helm	Gravity Stone	200	64	72	50	20	34	47	46	37	1120	186	204	146	55	69	55	54	45
078	Crazed Beastman	38	82	Gravity Stone		460	118	129	93	38	52	39	38	67	1932	294	323	233	84	98	60	59	49
079	Grunt (Spear)	8	38	Gravity Stone		80	28	41	24	8	20	42	42	34	644	118	129	91	38	52	50	50	42
080	Officer (Spear)	12	43	Gravity Stone		120	40	55	33	12	26	70	30	22	784	138	151	107	43	57	78	38	30
081	Wandering Spearman	35	78	Gravity Stone		400	106	116	83	35	49	38	77	27	1764	278	305	220	78	92	46	85	35
082	Deserter (Spear)	37	81	Gravity Stone		440	114	125	89	37	51	38	38	67	1876	290	319	230	82	96	46	46	75
083	Bodyguard (Spear)	16	49	Rune Helm	Gravity Stone	160	52	63	42	16	30	45	45	36	952	162	178	126	49	63	53	53	44
084	Beastman (Spear)	28	67	Black Mail	Black Helm	280	82	90	63	28	42	49	49	40	1456	234	257	184	67	81	57	57	48
085	Commander	9	39	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	95	31	52	29	9	29	43	42	34	682	122	142	99	39	60	51	50	42
086	Heat Commander	17	51	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	175	55	72	46	17	38	72	32	23	1018	170	195	138	51	72	80	40	31
087	Cool Commander	15	48	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	155	49	67	43	15	36	32	70	23	934	158	181	128	48	69	40	78	31
088	Electro Commander	41	87	Ring Mail	Plate Armor	525	130	149	106	41	62	39	39	67	2222	314	353	254	94	115	47	47	75
089	Silver Commander	24	61	Rune Helm	Rune Armor	245	74	87	60	24	45	48	48	38	1298	210	239	171	61	82	56	56	46
090	Beast Commander	33	75	Black Helm	Black Armor	365	98	113	80	33	54	51	50	40	1690	266	300	216	75	96	59	58	48

The Rune Geist Soldiers are a well-trained force that has focused strongly on defense and attack. These aggressive foot troops lack special abilities, preferring physical melee attacks. The Squad Leaders of their groups provide healing support with Heal Ally and give Accuracy bonuses to their troops.

These Soldiers are not pushovers, and working well with your partner is the best way to defeat them. They charge en masse, and this can be used to your advantage. For melee partners, start the fight by flanking them and use high-powered Charge attacks or destructive Link Attacks. This keeps them from surrounding your characters or exploiting openings. Attack from the outside in, toward the center of the group, peeling apart the outer edges.

For magically based partners, use Link Attacks that damage and disrupt your enemies. For example, lead the mass into Neige's Ice Wall, or use Neige's Ice Ring and The Minstrel's Thunder Ring to pincer the troop force. As described previously, work along the flanks; it is more important to take out the entire squad than worry about the relatively weak bonuses that the Squad Leaders provide to their troops.



DARK ELF ARCHERS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
091	Death Archer	10	40	Seductive Perfume		90	34	42	30	1	14	45	38	37	630	126	114	97	30	44	53	46	45
092	Bloody Archer	13	45	Seductive Perfume		117	43	47	35	3	17	72	26	25	756	146	132	113	35	49	80	34	33
093	Evil Shooter	17	51	Seductive Perfume		153	55	54	43	7	21	35	66	26	908	170	163	133	41	55	43	74	34
094	Devil Shooter	37	81	Yew		396	114	103	89	27	41	41	32	70	1689	230	261	230	72	86	49	40	78
095	Demon Hunter	20	55	Yew	Seductive Perfume	180	64	60	50	10	24	49	41	40	1008	186	168	146	45	59	57	49	48
096	Beast Hunter	28	67	Yew	Seductive Perfume	252	82	74	63	18	32	52	43	43	1311	234	211	184	57	71	60	51	51
097	Hell Sniper	14	46	Royal Gown	Yew	131	46	55	41	4	25	47	39	38	792	150	143	122	36	57	55	47	46
098	Dark Sniper	17	51	Royal Gown	Yew	158	55	60	46	7	28	74	27	26	918	170	161	138	41	62	82	35	34
099	Shadow Sniper	24	61	Royal Gown	Yew	221	74	73	60	14	35	37	68	29	1170	210	197	171	51	72	45	76	37
100	Tower Sniper	40	85	Holy Bow's Bandana		455	126	120	102	30	51	41	33	71	1900	306	284	248	80	101	49	41	79

Dark Elf Archers, which work with some of Rune Geist's troops, are some of the more challenging enemies to battle. They are aggressive, have powerful attacks, and are resistant to many forms of attack. They also tend to scatter when faced with a concerted attack; this, combined with their high bonuses to evasion, makes them difficult to hit and defeat.

Wound or defeat as many of the group that you can in your initial attack. After that, the Archers scatter in all directions, pausing only to make ranged attacks. Both your primary character and partner should stay as mobile as possible. Use your partner to flank the Archers and funnel them into small groups, which can then be dispatched by Charge or Link Attacks. Individual Archers can be herded into dead-ends or narrow confines within the terrain, then defeated; instead of attacking, they continue to flee and become boxed in by the terrain, making them much easier to attack.

Some of your partners are especially effective against ranged enemies. Elwyn and the Minstrel both have abilities that increase their effectiveness against archers and decrease the damage they take from ranged attacks. Consider specializing these two against ranged units and using them to eliminate these groups.



CENTAUR KNIGHTS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
101	Rune Knight	5	35	Magic Mirror		50	20	24	11	21	28	36	43	36	560	116	96	62	51	63	44	51	44
102	Copper Knight	9	39	Magic Mirror		90	34	38	20	25	36	64	31	24	672	134	110	72	55	67	72	39	32
103	Bronze Knight	18	52	Magic Mirror		180	63	56	35	34	46	27	74	27	1036	191	157	105	68	80	35	82	35
104	Brass Knight	14	46	Magic Mirror		140	50	49	29	30	42	26	33	65	868	165	135	90	62	74	34	41	73
105	Silver Knight	20	55	Pegasus Mane		200	70	60	38	36	48	41	49	40	1120	204	168	112	71	83	49	57	48
106	Black Knight	28	67	Black Mail	Black Helm	280	90	74	49	44	56	44	51	43	1456	257	211	142	83	95	52	59	51
107	Emerald Paladin	8	38	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	85	30	41	21	24	41	37	44	37	654	129	115	75	54	73	45	52	46
108	Ruby Paladin	13	45	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	135	47	53	30	29	48	65	33	25	850	160	140	92	61	80	73	41	33
109	Sapphire Paladin	22	58	Rune Helm	Rune Armor	225	77	68	45	38	57	29	75	28	1214	217	187	125	74	93	37	83	36
110	Gold Paladin	18	52	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	185	63	62	38	34	53	27	35	66	1046	191	165	110	77	96	50	58	50
111	Platinum Paladin	24	61	Holy Knight Armor		245	81	73	47	40	59	42	50	42	1298	231	197	133	77	96	50	58	50
112	Black Paladin	32	73	Black Helm	Black Armor	345	103	91	59	48	67	45	52	44	1634	283	241	163	89	108	53	60	52

The Centaur Paladins are elite troops of knights complete with brutal lances. They are fast moving and have high attack, and they are completely capable of running down vulnerable characters and pummeling them.

The Squad Leaders of these knights give increased Evasion to their support troops. They also have a nasty special ability: Combined Attack. At their word, the entire enemy force attacks with multiple lance thrusts at the same time. This makes it imperative that you do not allow a character to be surrounded by the entire group; to do so can seriously damage a member of your party.

In many ways, the tactics used here are similar to those used for the Rune Geist Soldiers. Work from the outside of the group in, using the best Charge and Link attacks for the job. Melee partners focus on high-damage Link Attacks to move along the outliers of the group as the other character goes around the opposing flank.

Magically based partners use their Link Attacks to disrupt and damage the front of the group, using abilities like Neige's Ice Wall or Neige's Ice Ring and the Minstrel's Thunder Ring. Keep your stronger character between the enemy group and your partner so that they do not become surrounded.

Despite their toughness, the Centaur Knights have relatively few resistances to elemental attacks. With practice in confronting their groups, they become easy to defeat, and missions geared toward fighting them are good ones to repeated visit for leveling your characters.



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CENTAUR ARCHERS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
113	Arrow Knight	9	39	Magic Mirror		81	34	34	17	15	26	38	44	37	605	134	98	61	45	57	46	52	45
114	Flame Arrow Knight	18	52	Magic Mirror		162	63	50	30	24	36	66	35	27	933	191	140	89	58	70	74	43	35
115	Ice Arrow Knight	45	93	Magic Mirror		540	160	117	76	51	63	33	81	33	2294	371	271	178	112	124	41	89	41
116	Thunder Arrow Knight	46	94	Magic Mirror		558	165	120	78	52	64	34	42	72	2344	376	274	180	114	126	42	50	80
117	Silver Arrow Knight	22	58	Magic Mirror		198	77	56	35	28	40	42	49	41	1084	217	169	102	64	76	50	57	49
118	Black Arrow Knight	47	96	Pegasus Mane		576	159	124	80	53	65	47	55	46	2445	385	280	184	118	130	55	63	54
119	Heavy Bow Knight	13	45	Rune Plate	Rune Helm	122	47	48	25	19	38	39	46	38	766	160	125	79	51	70	47	54	46
120	Burning Bow Knight	22	58	Rune Helm	Rune Armor	203	77	62	38	28	47	68	36	28	1094	217	167	107	64	83	76	44	36
121	Blizzard Bow Knight	51	102	Pegasus Mane		653	187	136	92	57	76	34	82	34	2757	411	308	202	130	149	42	90	42
122	Plasma Bow Knight	49	99	Pegasus Mane		617	178	130	87	55	74	34	43	72	2606	398	298	195	124	143	42	51	80
123	Silver Bow Knight	26	64	Pegasus Mane		239	85	69	42	32	51	43	51	42	1245	244	186	120	70	89	51	59	50
124	Black Bow Knight	32	73	Black Helm	Black Armor	311	103	82	51	38	57	45	52	44	1472	283	215	140	79	98	53	60	52

Like the Centaur Knights, the Centaur Archers are an elite brigade that is attack centered with fast movement and high damage. Once their groups initiate an attack, they shoot their arrows, run to all directions, then prepare another ranged volley. The Squad Leaders of these groups give Evasion bonuses to their squad, making them more difficult to hit and damage.

For the initial engagement, use a high-powered Charge Attack or Link Attack. As the Centaur Archers scatter, focus your subsequent attacks with low-powered Charge Attacks or even basic attacks. Use the surrounding terrain to your advantage, pressing your attacks until the Archers are caught in dead-ends or other movement-limiting features.

Individual Centaur Archers often move into other enemy squads. If either of your characters follow them, then the other squads are triggered and can attack you before you are properly prepared. Don't follow these fleeing Archers, and keep an eye on your partner to keep them from doing this. After a little bit, the Centaur Archer moves closer again and can be drawn out, or you can wait to attack the entire squad, Archer and all, when you have your abilities prepared.

Partners like Elwyn and the Minstrel are particularly good at fighting Archers. They do increased damage against Archers and take reduced damage from ranged fire. Consider using either of these two against foes such as the Centaur Archers.

MINOTAURS

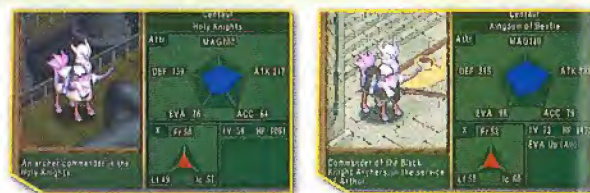
NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
125	Minotaur	19	54	Horned Helm	Great Horned Helm	209	67	64	42	24	28	45	46	38	1201	200	182	126	59	63	53	54	46
126	Megataur	45	93	Horned Helm	Great Horned Helm	660	160	146	102	50	54	78	39	30	2802	371	338	239	111	115	86	47	38
127	Gigataur	46	94	Horned Helm	Great Horned Helm	682	165	150	105	51	55	39	79	30	2864	376	342	241	113	117	47	87	38
128	Kudan	47	95	Horned Helm	Great Horned Helm	704	169	154	108	52	56	39	40	69	2987	385	350	247	117	121	47	48	77
129	Ebontaur	29	69	Horned Helm	Great Horned Helm	319	92	84	57	34	38	49	50	40	1663	266	242	169	74	78	57	58	48

Minotaurs can be challenging enemies. They have high stats, especially in their attack and defense. This makes them hard hitting and resistant to damage. Added to this, they have a Whirl Attack that does intense damage and has a finishing move. They are usually found in large, very aggressive groups, with Squad Leaders that are elemental Spellcasters.

The best way to fight Minotaurs is to use hit-and-run tactics combined with features of the terrain that limit their approach. Start the fight with a high-powered Charge or Link Attack that cuts into the group as a whole (especially the Squad Leader), then pull back to a location that limits the Minotaurs' approach. If they must funnel around barriers or go single file along a bridge, then that allows your characters to focus their attacks on individuals and keeps the Whirl Attacks of the Minotaurs from being as effective.

Aggressive melee characters can trade off doing powerful attacks, pushing through enemies as they move within the bottleneck. Support characters like Ryuna and the Minstrel must have a stronger character between them and their enemies. They have few defenses against the Whirl Attacks of the Minotaurs and can take large amounts of damage from them. Keep these support characters moving and out of Minotaurs' range to keep your characters safe.



NINJAS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
130	Black Cat	5	35	Shinobi Stone		45	19	24	17	13	26	43	36	36	504	106	96	90	43	61	51	44	44
131	Red Rabbit	20	55	Shinobi Stone		180	64	60	55	28	46	75	28	27	1008	186	168	162	63	81	83	36	35
132	Blue Serpent	12	43	Shinobi Stone		108	40	45	37	20	38	32	65	25	706	138	125	119	51	69	40	73	33
133	Yellow Tiger	16	49	Shinobi Stone		144	52	53	46	24	42	34	27	65	857	162	146	140	57	75	42	35	73
134	Black Lion	29	69	Ninja Gear	Shinobi Stone	261	84	76	72	37	55	52	44	43	1361	242	218	212	77	95	60	52	51
135	Koga Ninja	21	57	Ninja Gear		194	67	68	60	29	54	49	41	41	1069	194	183	174	65	80	57	49	49
136	Fuuma Ninja	22	58	Ninja Gear		203	70	69	63	30	55	49	42	41	1094	198	187	178	66	91	57	50	49
137	Saiga Ninja	33	75	Ninja Gear		329	98	95	88	41	66	52	45	44	1522	266	248	239	83	108	60	53	52

Ninjas prefer the art of stealth and surprise. Because of this, they are less aggressive than some of the other enemies; instead of charging your party, they pull back and dart in to attack. Ninjas are usually found in small groups or as Squad Leaders of Hound groups, where they let the Hounds attack for them.

In terms of special abilities, the regular Ninjas do have elemental attacks. Some of them also deposit traps, which are laid down between the party and the Ninja, detonating when the characters step on the trap. Ninja Squad Leaders give increased Evasion to their support troops and can Blink when cornered, teleporting away from your party's attacks.

Flanking and pincering moves with your primary character and partner help to keep the Ninjas from separating and harrying your group. This also focuses the Ninjas in small clumps, allowing your party to use low-powered Charge Attacks or Link Attacks against them. The Squad Leaders, in particular, are less likely to Blink away when they are in a small cluster of their compatriots, which makes them much easier to defeat.



BIRDMEN

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
138	Birdman	13	45	Moon Fragment	Feather Cap	117	47	52	39	18	27	38	39	46	786	160	146	126	50	59	46	47	54
139	Birdra	21	57	Moon Fragment	Feather Cap	189	73	68	57	26	35	67	28	36	1059	213	194	169	62	71	75	36	44
140	Hawk Soldier	18	52	Moon Fragment	Feather Cap	162	63	62	51	23	32	27	66	35	933	191	174	151	57	66	35	74	43
141	Eagle Fighter	45	93	Moon Fragment	Feather Cap	540	160	146	128	50	59	33	33	81	2294	371	338	239	111	120	41	41	89
142	Crow Knight	29	69	Moon Fragment	Feather Cap	261	92	84	72	34	43	43	44	52	1361	266	242	212	74	83	51	52	62
143	Bird Commander	17	51	Feather Cap		158	60	66	51	22	38	40	40	47	918	187	178	153	56	72	48	48	55
144	Sky Commander	25	63	Feather Cap		230	83	82	68	30	46	68	30	37	1220	239	228	196	68	84	76	38	45
145	Feather Commander	21	57	Feather Cap		194	73	74	60	26	42	28	67	36	1069	213	202	174	62	78	36	75	44
146	Icarus Commander	49	99	Feather Cap		617	178	168	145	54	63	33	34	82	2606	398	370	325	123	139	41	42	90
147	Raven Commander	50	100	Feather Cap		635	182	172	149	55	64	47	47	56	2656	402	374	329	125	141	55	55	64

Birdmen are some of the stronger flying enemies. They have moderately high Hit Points and a decent attack. While the basic troops are a little low in terms of Accuracy, their Squad Leaders raise this, making them well-rounded foes.

The Birdmen's main defining feature is their ability to rise to escape melee attacks, move around your character, then perform a dive attack. During their high-flight time, these enemies cannot be hit by standard attacks; Elwyn and the Minstrel, however, have ranged attacks that can damage them. Thus Elwyn and the Minstrels make wonderful partners against these flying enemies.

Hit-and-run attacks against clusters of these enemies work well to limit these troops effectiveness. Use Link Attacks or high-powered Charges when large numbers of enemies are available to you, then back off to engage the stragglers. Once there are only a few enemies left, use a moderate-powered Charge Attack to hit the individual enemies as they become vulnerable. Basic attacks only prolong the engagement, while the moderate Charge kills the foe outright, before he can rise again.



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LIZARDMEN

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
148	Lizardman	17	51	Lizard Tail		187	55	60	43	17	31	51	25	51	1108	170	170	133	51	65	59	33	59
149	Lizard Warrior	21	57	Lizard Tail		231	67	68	51	21	35	78	13	40	1293	194	194	152	57	71	86	21	40
150	Lizard Soldier	24	61	Lizard Tail		264	74	74	57	24	38	40	53	41	1416	210	210	166	61	75	48	61	49
151	Lizard Knight	43	90	Lizard Tail		616	138	138	109	43	57	45	16	85	2618	326	326	259	100	114	53	24	93
152	Alligator Man	21	57	Dragon Scale		236	67	74	54	21	42	52	26	53	1303	194	202	157	57	78	60	34	61
153	Crocodile Man	25	63	Dragon Scale		280	76	82	62	25	46	80	14	41	1488	218	226	177	63	84	88	22	49
154	Reptilian	28	67	Dragon Scale		313	82	88	66	28	49	42	53	43	1611	234	242	189	67	88	50	61	51
155	Lizard Lord	48	97	Dragon Scale		731	158	164	128	48	69	46	17	86	3059	354	362	287	114	135	54	25	94

Lizardmen form large groups that clump together. They rely upon their Hit Point Regeneration ability to support them, which is given an additional boost by their Squad Leaders. A second special ability allows them to add Confusion to their attacks, which can make the battle more chaotic.

However, Lizardmen are one of the more enjoyable groups to defeat. Their love of attacking in waves plays right into easy hit-and-run tactics, as you can Charge, retreat, and repeat. This is particularly effective when you take advantage of terrain features like bottlenecks. The Hit Point Regeneration ability is not so effective when they are killed in droves!

The Lizardmen's ability to use Confusion also does not help them. When a character is confused, simply using the analog stick in the opposite direction of your intended destination moves your character there. So it is a simple matter to compensate for the Confusion and keep attacking. Also, the Lizardmen truly prefer to attack over Confuse, so your characters don't have to deal with that status effect very often.



SKELETONS

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
156	Skeleton	3	33	Gravity Stone	Bone Mail	26	13	15	10	1	1	32	41	40	404	89	79	75	23	37	40	49	48
157	Wight	23	60	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	184	65	58	55	13	27	78	28	27	1008	186	165	162	50	64	86	36	35
158	Kwanica	12	43	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	96	36	40	33	2	16	15	84	23	628	125	111	107	33	47	23	92	31
159	Spartoi	39	84	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	384	118	98	96	29	43	21	32	91	1636	272	242	233	78	92	31	42	95

Undead enemies all have the ability to Revive themselves. When they are first defeated, they become a small pile of bones and material. After a certain amount of time, these piles reform into the monster once again. This cycle repeats until they have taken a large amount of damage, which finally causes them to be defeated for good.

Ryuna's Link Attack of Turn Undead is a marvelous, and necessary, tool for permanently defeating Undead enemies. Turn Undead automatically damages all Undead within its range and destroys any piles left behind. For high-level Undead enemies, this Link Attack is the only thing that guarantees victory.

Skeletons are Undead enemies that are melee based and have a high attack. They usually have Demonic Spellcasters as Squad Leaders, and the Skeletons work as a screen to allow the Demonic Spellcasters the opportunity to cast elemental barrages.

For low-level enemies, focus high-powered Charge or Link Attacks at the center of the group, focusing attacks on the Demonic Spellcaster. At this point, the Skeletons fall for the first time against your onslaught. With the Spellcaster defeated, your group can then concentrate on the Skeletons, attacking individuals or small clusters of them as they rise again. This is the best time to use Ryuna's Turn Undead ability.

High-level groups absolutely require Turn Undead and hit-and-run tactics. Keep Ryuna in the back and use Xion to trigger the squad to advance. Whenever possible, retreat so that your enemies are bottlenecked or their movement otherwise limited. Use a highly Charged Thousand Thrust to defeat the first clump and pull Xion ahead, starting the Turn Undead link as Xion moves forward. This permanently destroys each small cluster until Xion is able to directly engage the Demonic Spellcaster. The remaining Skeletons can then be mopped up and eliminated with Turn Undead.



MUMMIES

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
160	Mummy	5	35	Bandana	Corpse Crown	45	18	21	15	1	1	32	42	41	504	96	85	81	25	29	40	50	49
161	Ghoul	16	49	Bandana	Corpse Crown	144	47	47	42	6	10	76	30	30	857	146	130	126	33	43	84	38	38
162	Ancient Lord	23	60	Bandana	Corpse Crown	207	65	58	55	13	17	23	88	32	1134	186	165	162	50	54	31	95	41
163	Underlord	40	85	Corpse Crown		450	114	101	99	30	34	26	37	92	1890	276	245	243	80	84	36	48	95

Like Skeletons, Mummies are Undead enemies that usually have a Demonic Spellcaster as a Squad Leader. They can revive themselves after a certain point, and they have well-balanced combat stats in terms of attack, defense, and magical resistance. In addition, Mummies also use Poison attacks, with a poisonous breath that sickens your characters.

The basic tactics for fighting Mummy groups are identical to those for Skeletons. Ryuna really shines as a partner here, and she is essential for defeating high-level enemies.

Because of the Mummies' Poison ability, have Antidotes on hand. Poison attacks can be rougher on your character's Hit Points than direct attacks, so Antidotes save vital healing items, money, and your characters' lives.



ORC FOOT TROOPS

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
164	Orc - 3rd Class	3	33	Herb		38	14	18	9	3	10	41	40	32	604	98	98	66	33	47	49	48	40
165	Orc - 2nd Class	13	45	Herb		156	43	52	31	13	27	70	31	22	1008	146	146	100	45	59	78	39	30
166	Orc - 1st Class	25	63	Herb		300	76	76	52	25	39	36	74	25	1612	218	218	152	63	77	44	82	33
167	Orc Private	19	54	Herb		228	61	64	42	19	33	34	33	62	1310	182	182	126	54	68	42	41	70
168	Orc Corporal	6	36	Herb		77	22	36	19	6	23	42	41	33	715	118	118	80	36	57	50	49	41
169	Orc Sergeant	17	51	Herb		209	55	66	41	17	38	72	32	23	1219	170	178	123	51	72	80	40	31
170	Orc Master	29	69	Herb		353	84	90	60	29	50	37	75	27	1824	242	250	174	69	90	45	83	35
171	Orc Superior	23	60	Herb		281	72	78	52	23	44	35	34	64	1522	206	214	148	60	81	43	42	72

Orc Foot Troops attack aggressively and without regard for their lives. Fortunately, they are lower level enemies and have low Accuracy, often missing their targets. They have the ability to cast Confusion on your characters, but this Confusion affects them when their Squad Leader is defeated, causing them to scatter aimlessly and fearfully. Until the Squad Leader is defeated, he has the power to Call Allies to him, adding to the ranks of support troops.

For low-level groups, center your attacks on the Squad Leader, taking out that enemy before they can call in more allies. When the Squad Leader is defeated, the rest of the group panics, and you can then kill them as they flee. If the criterion for mission completion is to Destroy All Leaders, you can also choose to move on to the next engagement and ignore the confused Orcs.

Against high-level group, use flanking or pincer attacks to peel off small clusters of the enemy group and save the Squad Leader for later. It takes some time for the Squad Leader to replenish the force, and during that time you are decreasing the squad numbers. This ensures that the Orcs do not become confused and scatter to the winds, cutting down on the time needed and danger incurred when your group chases after them.



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ORC ARCHERS

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
172	Orc Warrior	14	46	Herb		154	46	49	29	4	18	45	44	35	954	150	135	90	36	50	53	52	43
173	Orc 2nd Lieutenant	26	64	Herb		286	78	71	46	16	30	75	35	26	1509	222	200	135	54	68	83	43	34
174	Orc Lieutenant	20	55	Herb		220	64	60	38	10	24	34	72	24	1232	186	168	112	45	59	42	80	32
175	Orc Captain	29	69	Herb		319	84	76	50	19	33	37	36	66	1663	242	218	147	54	68	45	44	74

Orc Archers are heavily attack centered and cause Confusion to your group. Their Squad Leaders also have the ability to Call Allies, adding to the numbers that you must fight. After the initial engagement, Orc Archers run away from direct combat and begin ranged combat only, fleeing when your characters approach.

Use your most powerful abilities on the large starting group, with an eye toward defeating the Squad Leader as quickly as possible. Even after the group bolts, follow the Squad Leader and take out that enemy. The last thing that you need when fighting an archer group is to have more archers appear when the Squad Leader calls allies.

With the Squad Leader down, herd the remaining Orc Archers into small groups. Force them against walls or into dead-ends. Use low-level Charges to take out the smaller groups and basic attacks against individuals.

When working with your partner, keep him or her from following an archer into a second group of enemies. Archers love the additional support that more foes provide, and your partner often fails to see this danger. You don't want a fight to happen before you are completely prepared to handle it.

In terms of partners, Elwyn and the Minstrel have several abilities that help them against ranged units. Consider using them against Orc Archers.



ORC SHAMANS

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
176	Orc Major	18	52	Herb		203	58	62	38	8	29	46	46	36	1149	157	182	110	42	63	54	54	44
177	Orc Lt. Colonel	30	70	Herb		335	86	84	54	20	41	76	37	27	1704	222	254	155	60	81	84	45	38
178	Orc Colonel	24	61	Herb		269	74	73	47	14	35	35	74	25	1426	189	218	133	51	72	43	82	33
179	Orc Vice-General	33	75	Herb		401	98	89	59	23	44	38	37	66	1848	240	274	168	65	86	46	45	74
180	Orc Brigadier	15	48	Herb		165	35	40	48	15	29	85	24	16	1016	158	111	151	48	62	93	32	24
181	Orc Major General	25	63	Herb		275	54	54	71	25	39	29	88	18	1478	218	153	210	63	77	38	95	26
182	Orc Lt. General	29	69	Herb		319	59	59	79	29	43	30	29	80	1663	242	170	233	69	83	38	37	88
183	Orc General	7	37	Magestone		82	21	33	28	7	25	82	22	13	687	114	88	112	37	58	90	30	21
184	Orc Marshal	20	55	Magestone		225	51	57	63	20	41	27	86	17	1242	186	139	183	55	76	35	94	25
185	Orc Commander	29	69	Magestone	Wizard Scroll	324	63	69	82	29	50	30	29	80	1673	242	178	238	69	90	38	37	88

Orc Shamans are usually seen as Squad Leaders for other groups. Their abilities are elemental in nature and vary quite a bit depending on the individual. They are, however, like most casters in that they have a weak defense, which makes them vulnerable to melee attacks.

This makes them prime targets for your initial assault on Orc groups. Center your first high-powered Charge or Link Attack on the Orc Shaman in the center of the group to defeat them quickly. With them taken out early in the fight, they are unable to use any of their elemental abilities!



GOBLINS

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
186	Goblin	7	37	Bomb		70	30	34	18	7	18	42	42	33	618	136	114	77	37	51	50	50	41
187	Goblin Butcher	10	40	Bomb		100	40	46	26	10	24	69	30	21	700	151	126	86	40	54	77	38	29
188	Goblin Ripper	43	90	Bomb		580	165	138	97	43	57	39	79	28	2380	391	326	230	100	114	47	87	36
189	Goblin Murderer	42	88	Bomb		540	160	134	93	42	56	39	40	67	2268	381	318	224	96	110	47	48	75
190	Hobgoblin	11	42	Bomb		115	44	54	31	11	32	43	44	34	766	160	142	96	42	63	51	52	42
191	Prince Goblin	14	46	Bomb		145	55	60	36	14	35	70	32	22	878	180	159	108	46	67	78	40	30
192	King Goblin	47	96	Bomb		645	184	160	111	47	61	40	79	29	2726	420	368	252	112	133	48	87	37
193	Kaiser Goblin	46	94	Bomb		625	180	156	108	46	60	40	40	68	2614	410	350	246	108	129	48	48	76

Goblins are one of the lowest-level enemies on the roster. They have a small bonus to attack stats, and their Squad Leaders add to this, with Attack Up All. Their main defense is in numbers, and large groups of Goblins are common.

Fighting against Goblin groups is a good way to practice the techniques needed against high-level melee groups. Practice flanking the group with a melee partner or using some of your support characters special abilities, like Neige's Ice Wall or the Minstrel's Thunder Ring. Because Goblins are not intrinsically dangerous, think of them as an opportunity to discover what you like about each member of your party and your partner's strengths and weaknesses.



DEVILINGS

NORMAL MODE

ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
194	Deviling	15	48	Seductive Perfume		150	49	56	48	10	29	37	44	44	924	158	158	151	43	62	45	52	52
195	Junior Devil	25	63	Seductive Perfume		250	76	76	71	20	39	66	34	35	1344	218	218	210	58	77	74	42	43
196	Adolescent Devil	42	88	Seductive Perfume		540	134	134	129	37	56	30	77	39	2268	318	318	309	91	110	38	85	47
197	Little Devil	44	91	Seductive Perfume		580	142	142	136	39	58	31	38	68	2436	330	330	321	97	116	39	46	76
198	Imp	19	54	Seductive Perfume		195	61	70	61	14	40	38	45	46	1102	182	190	179	49	75	46	53	54
199	Grenlin	48	97	Seductive Perfume		665	159	164	156	43	69	70	39	40	2782	354	362	349	109	135	78	47	48
200	Gargoyle	46	94	Seductive Perfume		625	150	156	148	41	67	31	78	39	2614	342	350	337	103	129	39	86	47
201	Losser Demon	30	70	Seductive Perfume		305	86	92	84	25	51	28	36	76	1550	246	254	243	65	91	36	44	84

These flying enemies are maneuverable and dangerous. They are found in large groups and become aggressive over distance, moving over terrain to attack your party. Deviling Squad Leaders have the ability to raise the attack power of their squad, with Attack Up All.

Because these groups become aggressive at range, tease them forward and retreat while Charging to an open area. Open areas are your friend, because they help to nullify the maneuverability of these flying units and give you the room you need to combat them. As your enemies form into small clusters, unleash your high-powered Charge Attack into the group. At this point, your partner should stay as mobile as possible and continue to support your attacks, and Link Attacks are effective at this time.

Individual enemies are then hunted down and destroyed, leaving your group free to move on to juicier squads.



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GOLEMS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
202	Golem	7	37	Mithril	Stone Armor	133	25	44	21	1	1	39	39	39	1170	114	148	87	17	31	47	47	47
203	Magma Golem	23	60	Stone Armor	Stone Helm	437	72	93	55	3	17	85	24	24	2394	206	267	162	40	54	93	32	32
204	Icerock Golem	24	61	Stone Armor	Stone Helm	456	74	96	57	4	18	25	84	25	2447	210	263	166	41	55	33	92	33
205	Stone Golem	33	75	Stone Armor	Stone Helm	684	98	127	77	13	27	27	87	87	3192	266	345	211	55	69	35	35	95
206	Talos	26	64	Stone Armor	Stone Helm	494	78	101	60	6	20	46	45	45	2606	222	288	175	44	58	54	53	53
207	Metal Golem	52	103	Stone Armor	Stone Helm	1406	174	226	138	32	46	51	50	50	5905	378	491	301	106	120	59	58	58

Usually found alone or in pairs, Golems should be treated as mini-bosses. With high Hit Points and a high defense, they are tough to bring down. In addition, these elemental foes have such high resistances to their given element that they are almost immune to elemental damage from it.

Golems are monsters that highlight the importance of having mixed elemental attributes within your party and on their weapons. For instance, pairing Neige with an Ice blade-wielding Xion against an Ice Golem would not be a good idea. However, the fight becomes much more doable, even with Neige as a partner, if Xion has a Fire-based blade.

Because of their high Hit Points and defense, use some of the most powerful Charge and Link Attacks against them. Melee partners can join in with their Link Attacks or Single Skills like Rapid Fire. Support characters should be kept out of the way and contribute with other skills, like Ryuna's ability to raise the attack and defense of her partner.



DEMONS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
208	Demon	29	69	Devil's Crown		580	92	92	87	49	63	90	29	20	3024	508	508	255	89	103	95	39	29
209	Greater Demon	37	81	Devil's Crown		880	125	125	119	57	71	31	90	22	3752	609	609	308	102	116	41	95	31
210	Archdemon	48	97	Devil's Crown		1320	173	173	167	68	82	33	32	84	5544	743	743	376	134	148	41	40	92
211	Belial	50	100	Devil's Crown		1400	182	182	175	70	84	33	34	24	5890	768	768	389	140	154	95	44	35
212	Beelzebub	53	105	Devil's Crown		1520	195	195	189	73	87	34	33	24	6440	810	810	411	150	164	45	95	35
213	Astarte	57	110	Devil's Crown		1680	213	213	205	77	91	34	34	85	7009	852	852	433	160	174	42	42	93

With high overall stats, especially their magic and attack, Demons have the potential to be dangerous foes. They are able to use a strong melee attack as well as cast powerful elemental spells. Although most often found singly, there are cases, such as the final mission, where large groups of Demons congregate.

Each Demon should be treated as though it is a mini-boss. That means using your most powerful Charge and Link Abilities and Single Skills like Rapid Fire. Use terrain to your advantage as well, keeping Demons at range and moving in after you have fully prepared your high-end attack. As versatile as Demons are, they are slow to react to most attacks.

In large encounters, limit the number of Demons that can come at your party by creating bottlenecks and securing a path of retreat for your characters, particularly vulnerable supporting characters. The use of low-level Charge Attacks, especially by Xion, hits multiple enemies and protects your characters from Demon attacks.



CREEPERS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
214	Creepers	27	66	Herb		270	88	96	62	37	51	49	39	49	1428	253	276	182	76	90	57	47	57
215	Chaos Creeper	28	67	Herb		280	90	98	63	38	52	76	25	35	1456	257	280	184	77	91	84	34	44
216	Abyss Creeper	29	69	Antidote		290	92	100	65	39	53	37	66	36	1512	266	290	191	79	93	45	74	44
217	Hell Creeper	49	99	Antidote		680	178	194	128	59	73	41	29	79	2884	398	434	288	128	142	49	37	87
218	Despair Bug	31	72	Antidote		325	99	114	73	41	62	50	40	50	1606	279	312	205	82	103	58	48	58
219	Crime Bug	32	73	Antidote		345	103	118	76	42	63	77	27	37	1634	283	317	209	83	104	65	35	45
220	Calamity Bug	33	75	Antidote		365	107	123	80	43	64	38	66	37	1690	292	327	216	85	106	46	74	45
221	Nemesis Bug	53	105	Antidote		765	195	219	144	63	84	41	30	80	3230	424	471	313	140	161	49	38	88

Creepers are bug-like enemies that prefer large swarming groups. Many of them have nasty special abilities like Poison and Paralysis. The Squad Leaders are slightly more powerful versions of the support troops and give attack bonuses to their underlings.

To their disadvantage, Creepers are not as robust as other monsters and cannot withstand direct assaults. Focus your high-powered Charge or Link Attacks on the center of the group and eliminate large number of them. The remainder of the squad aggressively moves to attack, allowing your party to pull back while Charging and then repeat the process.

As always, carry a full supply of Antidotes when confronting Poisonous enemies. The Poison that Creepers have is potent stuff that lingers for some time, and there is no reason to make your group suffer through that.



ANGELS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLt
222	Angel	27	66	Halo	Fire Halo	275	80	70	79	27	46	85	26	26	1438	230	192	222	66	92	93	34	34
223	Archangel	52	103	Ice Halo	Divine Halo	745	174	146	171	52	78	30	90	31	3118	378	255	409	126	152	39	95	41
224	Principality	44	91	Thunder Halo	Divine Halo	585	142	120	139	44	70	29	29	89	2446	330	272	321	102	128	38	38	95
225	Virtue	28	67	Fire Halo	Divine Halo	285	82	72	80	28	54	85	26	26	1466	234	196	226	67	93	94	34	34
226	Dominion	30	70	Halo	Ice Halo	305	86	75	84	30	56	26	87	27	1550	246	205	238	70	96	34	95	35
227	Seraph	29	69	Halo	Thunder Halo	295	84	74	82	29	55	26	26	87	1522	242	202	233	69	95	34	34	95

These flying enemies attack alone or are found as Squad Leaders of groups. Angels have powerful elemental attacks and give bonuses to all monsters within a given area. These bonuses include Hit Point Regeneration and elemental or damage resistances.

Like most flying enemies, Angels prefer ranged combat and retreat when confronted. This allows your group to separate the squad from its leader, leaving the squad more vulnerable. After the support troops are dealt with, the Angel can then be tackled alone.

Treat Angels as though they are mini-bosses. Lure them out into a large open area and use high-powered Charge or Link Attacks against them. Angels are not blessed with high Hit Points, so they are weak in direct combat.



ANCIENT WEAPONS (EYES) (ORBS)

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
228	Torch Eye	29	69	Tamahagane		319	84	84	72	29	43	41	42	41	1663	242	242	212	69	83	49	50	49
229	Warning Eye	30	70	Tamahagane		330	86	86	74	30	44	68	29	28	1694	246	246	216	70	84	76	37	36
230	Assault Eye	35	78	Tamahagane		440	106	106	92	35	49	29	69	29	1940	278	278	245	78	92	37	77	37
231	Strict Eye	32	73	Tamahagane		374	94	94	81	32	46	29	29	68	1786	259	259	227	73	87	37	37	76
232	Ancient Hunter	33	75	Sight	Hi-Fi Sight	401	98	104	88	33	54	42	42	42	1858	266	274	239	75	96	50	50	50
233	Red Alert	34	76	Sight	Hi-Fi Sight	423	102	108	91	34	55	68	30	29	1888	270	278	243	76	97	76	38	37
234	Judgment	39	84	Hi-Fi Sight	Super Hi-Fi Sight	533	122	128	109	39	60	30	69	30	2258	302	310	271	88	109	38	77	38
235	Inspector	36	79	Sight	Hi-Fi Sight	467	110	116	99	36	57	30	30	68	1981	282	290	253	79	100	38	38	76

The large groups that these enemies come in are brutal. By themselves, the Eye Ancient Weapons aren't terribly mean; they fall quickly against a solid attack set. However, en masse, they have the ability to Charge and release an elemental attack of great strength with high range. The Squad Leaders give Accuracy Up All to their squad, helping these elemental attacks hit their targets.

Whenever possible, avoid keeping these enemies at range. That favors their use of their Charge ability, which makes them dangerous, and keeps your characters from disrupting their Charge.

Instead, wade into the fray, hitting as many enemies as possible with low-powered Charge attacks or even basic attacks. Focus especially on any enemies that you see Charging; this is visually indicated by a glow around the enemy.

Use healing items as early as possible, because these enemies hit hard and quickly. Use healing items that raise a good amount at a time, like the Healing Vials. It is easy to become overwhelmed by the Eye Ancient Weapons, so heal early and often.



ANCIENT WEAPONS (COLOSSUS)

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
236	Colossus S	33	75	Tamahagane		324	89	98	85	38	47	37	37	37	1512	240	266	234	80	89	45	45	45
237	Colossus R	30	70	Tamahagane		270	78	86	74	35	44	63	24	23	1386	222	246	216	75	84	71	32	31
238	Colossus V	34	76	Tamahagane		342	92	102	88	39	48	25	63	24	1538	243	270	238	81	90	33	71	32
239	Colossus X	36	79	Tamahagane		378	99	110	96	41	50	25	63	25	1613	254	282	248	84	93	33	33	71
240	Colossus Brain S	34	76	Metal Armor	Metal Helm	347	92	108	91	39	55	38	37	37	1548	243	278	243	81	97	46	45	45
241	Colossus Brain R	40	85	Metal Armor	Metal Helm	455	114	132	113	45	61	65	25	25	1900	276	314	275	95	111	73	33	33
242	Colossus Brain V	36	79	Metal Armor	Metal Helm	383	99	116	99	41	57	25	64	24	1623	254	290	253	84	100	33	72	32
243	Colossus Brain X	38	82	Metal Armor	Metal Helm	419	107	124	105	43	59	25	64	25	1749	265	302	264	89	105	33	33	72

The Colossus Ancient Weapons are flying enemies with balanced stats. They come in large groups and several dangerous special abilities. They fire missiles at range and are sectional. After the body of the Ancient Weapon takes a certain amount of damage, the head splits off and attacks by itself. This part runs into your characters and retreats before your party can engage. Once the head part has taken damage, it self-destructs, injuring any nearby party members.

Because these Ancient Weapons are found in large groups, it's easy to see how these monsters are difficult to fight. The best way is to trigger the group at range, then retreat to a wide open area while Charging your attack. As the group meets your party, surround and flank the mass of them, pushing them together. At this point, there should be a number of disembodied head pieces. Cluster these together to eliminate them. Individual heads should be winnowed through with basic attacks, or they can be run past and ignored. At this point, they are more of an annoyance than a danger.

Like the Eye Ancient Weapons, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the Colossus Weapons. Use high-level healing items like the Healing Vials, and don't be afraid to use them early and often.



UNDEAD MACHINES

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
244	Brover	25	63	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	175	76	69	52	20	24	54	45	36	941	218	197	152	58	62	62	53	44
245	Mecha Skeleton	32	73	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	238	94	85	65	27	31	95	28	18	1137	258	233	181	68	72	95	40	30
246	Cyborg Skeleton	39	84	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	336	122	110	85	34	38	38	88	18	1431	302	272	212	83	87	47	95	26
247	Iron Skeleton	40	85	Bone Mail	Bone Armor	350	126	114	88	35	39	38	28	79	1470	306	276	215	85	89	46	36	87
248	Metalbones	41	87	Bone Mail	Bone Armor	364	130	117	91	36	40	58	48	39	1548	314	283	221	89	93	66	56	47
257	Brover mkl	36	79	Bone Mail	Bone Helm	420	121	121	96	56	60	57	48	39	1792	310	310	248	99	103	65	56	46
258	Roboskeleton	41	87	Bone Helm	Bone Armor	520	143	143	114	61	65	95	30	20	2212	345	345	277	114	118	95	42	32
259	Doom Droid	43	90	Bone Helm	Bone Armor	568	151	151	121	63	67	38	69	19	2380	358	358	288	120	124	47	95	28
260	Ironsuit	44	91	Bone Helm	Bone Armor	580	156	156	124	64	68	39	29	79	2436	363	363	292	122	126	47	37	87
261	Full Metalbones	50	100	Bone Helm	Bone Armor	700	182	182	146	70	74	60	50	40	2940	402	402	324	140	144	68	58	48

The Undead Machines are one of the nastier large groups that Xion and the others face. Like all Undead, they have the ability to Revive themselves, and they are high enough level that Ryuna's Turn Undead Link Ability is a necessity. They can cast Confusion on the party, making it difficult for your group to focus their attacks. These Undead Machines are usually found with high-level Demonic Spellcasters as Squad Leaders, and these fights are some of the hardest in the game.

Drag out individual or small numbers of Undead Machines from the larger group, away from the Demonic Spellcaster. Fortunately, Undead Machines have comparatively low Hit Points for their level. As that occurs, position Ryuna behind Xion and push Xion forward during the Link Attack. As much as possible, keep Ryuna out of the conflict with group and use the Turn Undead Link Attack with her as the enemies fall.

If surrounded, disrupt the Demonic Spellcaster when they begin casting and use low-level Thousand Thrust to keep the enemies at bay. Remember, only enemies that are permanently defeated (through Turn Undead) return if you are forced to retreat. It is in your best interest to use Turn Undead as much as possible to get rid of them for good.

The Confusion ability the Undead Machines possess makes the fights more difficult, but there's a way combat it. Move your party members using the analog stick in the opposite direction of your intended destination. This moves your characters in the proper manner. Fortunately, Confusion does not last long, so it is only a temporary setback.



BIOMONSTERS

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XFr	Xic	XLI
249	Biomonster	29	69	Antidote		290	84	68	72	29	43	56	56	57	1512	242	194	212	69	83	64	64	65
250	Biocreature	31	72	Antidote		320	90	72	78	31	45	95	37	38	1536	254	204	223	72	86	95	49	50
251	Bioroid	34	76	Antidote		380	102	82	88	34	48	38	95	39	1708	270	216	238	76	90	50	95	51
252	Biocamera	50	100	Antidote		700	166	133	146	50	64	42	43	95	2940	386	293	324	120	134	54	55	95
253	DNA666	33	75	Antidote	Beast God Armor	365	98	95	88	33	54	57	57	57	1690	266	221	239	75	96	65	65	65
254	Experiment #17	35	78	Antidote	Beast God Armor	405	106	102	95	35	56	95	38	39	1774	278	231	250	78	99	95	50	51
255	Lost Number	38	82	Antidote	Beast God Armor	465	118	113	106	38	59	39	95	40	1942	294	244	264	84	105	51	95	52
256	Experiment X	54	106	Antidote	Beast God Armor	785	182	170	163	54	75	43	44	95	3286	380	320	351	132	153	55	55	95

Biomonsters have high resistances, are extremely poisonous, and decrease your party's defense. The Squad Leaders increase their group's damage with Attack Up All. With their large groups, Biomonsters are strong enemies.

Hit-and-run tactics work well to combat these foes. Run forward while Charging, hit them hard, then retreat while Charging again; repeat this multiple times until your enemies are defeated. Melee partners can join in the rush, but magically based partners should stay firmly in the back; most magical partners aren't high on defense to begin with, and that weakness combined with Poison is not good for their health.

As you engage the group, peel off layers of the enemies before delving into the center. This keeps your characters from being surrounded and limits the enemy's effectiveness.

As always when fighting Poisonous enemies, stay stocked up on Antidotes to combat this status effect.



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BOSSSES

NORMAL MODE ADVANCED MODE

#	NAME	NORMAL LV	ADVANCED LV	ITEMS (NORMAL)	ITEMS (ADVANCED)	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XPR	XIC	XLI	HP	ATK	DEF	MAG	ACC	EVA	XPR	XIC	XLI
262	General Dresden	21	57	Dark Matter		1501	73	82	54	16	30	49	41	41	8408	213	210	157	52	66	57	49	49
263	Visage#1	27	66	Dark Matter		1404	64	78	79	27	41	55	56	56	7425	184	200	227	66	80	63	64	64
264	Visage#2	34	76	Dark Matter		1976	82	96	100	34	48	57	57	58	8881	216	232	267	76	90	65	65	66
265	Cheiron	29	69	Dark Matter		2073	84	98	53	29	63	43	52	44	10810	242	258	152	69	103	51	60	52
266	Prince Galahad	25	63	Dark Matter		1137	69	90	74	25	54	42	42	51	6115	197	234	215	63	92	50	50	59
267	Mechanical Emperor	36	79	Dark Matter		2730	110	124	99	36	55	44	45	54	11648	282	298	253	79	98	52	53	62
268	Diocles	40	85	Dark Matter		3250	126	140	113	40	54	72	37	36	13650	306	322	275	90	104	80	45	44
269	Vakka	39	84	Dark Matter		2808	122	121	109	47	65	54	45	45	11957	302	288	271	96	114	62	53	53
270	Balarha	38	82	Dark Matter		2990	118	132	106	38	52	36	36	72	12558	294	310	264	84	98	44	44	80
271	Dyne	39	84	Dark Matter		3744	134	160	88	29	33	45	54	45	15943	332	378	217	78	82	53	62	53
272	Mother Creeper	38	82	Dark Matter		7475	118	155	106	48	52	48	48	48	31395	294	339	238	94	98	56	56	56
273	Behemoth	43	90	Dark Matter		7280	138	179	124	43	57	49	49	48	30940	326	407	293	100	114	57	57	56
274	Byakko	39	84	Dark Matter		3120	122	136	109	39	53	36	72	36	13286	302	318	271	88	102	44	80	44
275	Mysterious Youth	19	54	Dark Matter		864	61	78	51	37	35	46	38	45	4968	182	198	147	72	70	54	48	53
276	Keiner	23	63	Dark Matter		1664	90	104	73	49	47	50	41	40	7261	254	270	206	90	88	58	49	57



This chapter reveals a number of secret items and paths that are meant to be found in *Shining Tears*. These lead to several extra missions and a few treasures that aren't found through normal means during the campaign.

BIRDMAN MATERIAL EXCHANGE

There is a thriving material trade in the Birdmen's Village. When first walking into that area of Shildia, you see a Birdman flying near the main road. Talk to this Birdman and learn about the shortage of Mithril facing the crafters of Shildia.

If you are relatively full on Mithril, this person is a good guy to see, because he trades two of your Mithril pieces for one item of another type. This item varies, which is why it's sometimes a great deal and other times useless. If you catch the Birdman when he has something that you direly need, it's wonderful!

Return here between battles to see what material the Birdman is currently offering to trade.



A TRIO OF FRIENDS

- ③ Speak to Balbaro in the Birdmen's Village
- ③ Find Marine at the top of the Forest of Spirits Village
- ③ Talk to Lang on the right side of the Dwarven Caverns (at a point of light by a tunnel)
- ③ Return to Balboa for a Kung Fu Jacket



For a few extra items, walk to Birdmen's Village and go all the way around to the northern end of the walkway, then turn right from there. There is a Birdman who traveled the area around Shildia and made some friends among the Elves and Dwarves. Communications being what they are, Balbaro has lost track of Marine (an Elf) and Lang (a Dwarf). He asks that you send his greetings if you should meet these people in your travels.

Once the Forest of Spirits is open to your party, look in the upper boughs of the tree. This leads you on a path that circles around the entire map before leading to the northern end. Marine is up there and gives you a **Panacea** for your effort.

Later, when you wish to find Lang, enter the Dwarven Caverns and follow the lower route toward the right end of the map. A shining point of light near one of the tunnels beckons; try to activate this. Lang comes running, thinking that you plan on grabbing some of his ore, but he is much happier to hear why you are really there. He gives the party a chunk of **Mithril** in return. This is no small thing, considering the shortage of Mithril in the region these days.

Return to Balbaro and let him know that his friends are well. Balbaro is more than pleased and gives the party a final boon of a **Kung Fu Jacket**!

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CARD COLLECTING

Giving Cards to Pios allows you to collect and view quite a bit of information about the enemies in *Shining Tears*. There are 276 unique Cards, and Pios is good enough to reward at several points for turning in these. Note that you are free to return to the collection and take out important Cards if they are needed in battle.

One surprising tidbit is that you are rewarded even for non-unique cards. This makes it much easier to reach the early rewards: the **Cosmic Disk**, **Survival Book**, and **Soul Scroll**. Only the final reward is held in reserve for a full collection. It takes quite some time to reach this; the trick is to complete the Tower of Heaven, grab the Medal of the Heavens, and use that accessory to dramatically improve the Card drop rate.

QUICKLIST FOR CARD REWARDS

CARD # COLLECTED	REWARD FROM PIOS	EFFECT WHEN EQUIPPED
10	Cosmic Disk	Adds to Magic Power (MAG +12)
100	Survival Book	Raises HP, (1 HP/10 Cards)
200	Soul Scroll	Adds to SP, (1 SP/10 Cards)
276	Book of Elders	Adds to Attack, Increases With Collection

REPUTATION

As the warriors of the Heroes' Hearth defend Shildia, so does knowledge of their fine deeds spread to the people. There are several ranks of reputation that follow from this. At the first rank, a Beastman appears just outside the door of the Heroes' Hearth. Talk to him and ask about what the people are saying to hear of the people's fine opinion of you. Beyond that, at each new rank, including the first, your party receives a gift from the citizens of Shildia.



GIFTS FROM THE PEOPLE

RANK	GIFT	RECEIVED WHEN
The Greenhorns	None	Bengal First Appears
The Dependables	Goddess' Tears	After Winning "The Defiant"
Invincible Champions	Samurai Helmet	Shortly After the Forest of Spirits

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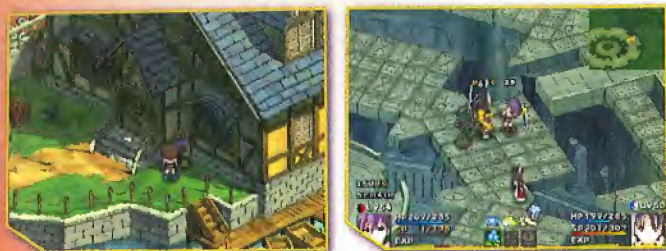
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ADVANCED MODE EXPLAINED



Throughout this guide there is mention of the Advanced Mode. This stage of late gameplay is discussed here at length. Rather than getting a New Game+ type of mode, you receive the ability to do two things after completing the normal campaign. First, you are always free to return to your saved game and play in the Mirror World, the Tower of Heaven, and other such late-game excursions. You are also free to load your saved game in Advanced Mode, which appears the next time you load *Shining Tears* after winning.

This mode keeps your old party at full level and power; you keep everyone's equipment, money, items, and so forth, yet the game restarts. Sound easy? In no way is this a cakewalk even for veteran adventurers, because Advanced Mode offers greatly raised difficulty. Monsters are increased by about 30 levels, and their overall Attack and Defense attributes are improved from Normal Mode.

Playing the game this second time gets characters toward Level 60! Also, there are higher percentages of special helms and armor pieces in this mode, more money dropped by even mundane monsters, and each character can train their skills up to 20, instead of the normal skill cap after 10 ranks.

Even after starting Advanced Mode, you can load your party in Normal Mode and fully function there. This makes it nice to flip back and forth. Gain levels in Advanced Mode, then take on the Tower of Heaven in Normal Mode!

TOWER OF HEAVEN

During the final third of the game in both Normal and Advanced Mode, the Tower of Heaven is unveiled. Though used briefly for a required Campaign Mission, the majority of the Tower of Heaven is opened as an area of optional content. This 60-floor dungeon starts in a mild fashion, with enemies that won't challenge anyone. However, every five or so floors the difficulty of the dungeon escalates. By the 30th floor, the enemies begin to surpass the nastiest foes of Normal Mode. Toward the end, the Tower of Heaven poses as dire a threat as many of the tougher beasts that can be found well into Advanced Mode.

Thus, a sincere run should not even be attempted by anyone shy of Levels 50-60. This includes having a proper fourth-tier weapon, armor with high bonuses, hopefully some of the best properties, and the will to put major time into the challenge.



You can retreat and save throughout the dungeon, but the entire place resets if you try to level in other places in between. That is another reason why it's best to wait on the Tower of Heaven until you have characters that are fully prepared. If you have problems in the floors around the high 30s, have no fear. There are clumps of floors that are especially nasty in the tower, but these clear out before too long. All told, being above Level 50 and having decent equipment is about all that you need (well, and a fair bit of patience).

Like the missions, there are several different types of fights within the Tower of Heaven. Most involve killing all leaders or a specific number of leaders. Toward the higher levels, the groups of enemies become challenging, especially the Undead groups; remember that there is no dishonor in retreating several times even within a single floor. Any items that you leave behind when you retreat will still be there when you come back, and every enemy defeated is one fewer that you must face when you return.

There are also mini-boss fights that require you to defeat specific leaders, marked by a large red dot on the mini-map. These battles are easily defeated by hit-and-run Charge attacks. Because the mini-bosses often have elemental weaknesses (as seen by their color), having a good partner (like Neige against the Fire Dragon), using the proper accessories, or wielding a counter-elemental weapon all make these fights much easier.

Keep in mind that even if Xion is defeated, he can still return to the same floor of the tower. The enemies that are defeated remain vanquished.

There is an added bonus for taking on the Tower of Heaven. The equipment that drops during the latter stages of the dungeon is rare and quite powerful. Getting the materials here to make Mithril Helms and Mithril Armor is almost worth the trip by itself!

For beating the 60th floor and the Dark Dragon, you are able to find the **Medal of the Heavens**. After leaving the Tower of Heaven, travel to Birdmen's Village and search the statue in the upper left. The Medal of the Heavens is used to increase the drop rate of Enemy Cards!



ENDINGS AND RELATIONSHIPS

At the end of the game, you are given an ending between Xion and one of his allies. The person you have the highest reputation with in the group is chosen, and that ending is shown.

If there is any doubt as to which character is in line for this honor, watch for a cutscene toward the later part of the game. Xion focuses his attention on helping one member of the group when they are in need, and that is the person you are on track for seeing at the end.

Other indicators of relationships between Xion and his allies include the calls people make when falling in battle; those who are fully loyal to Xion use a different sound when brought down. Also, the singer in Wildcat Lane writes longer songs throughout the game as your relationship improves with that special someone. The farther this song gets, the more your relationship has grown.



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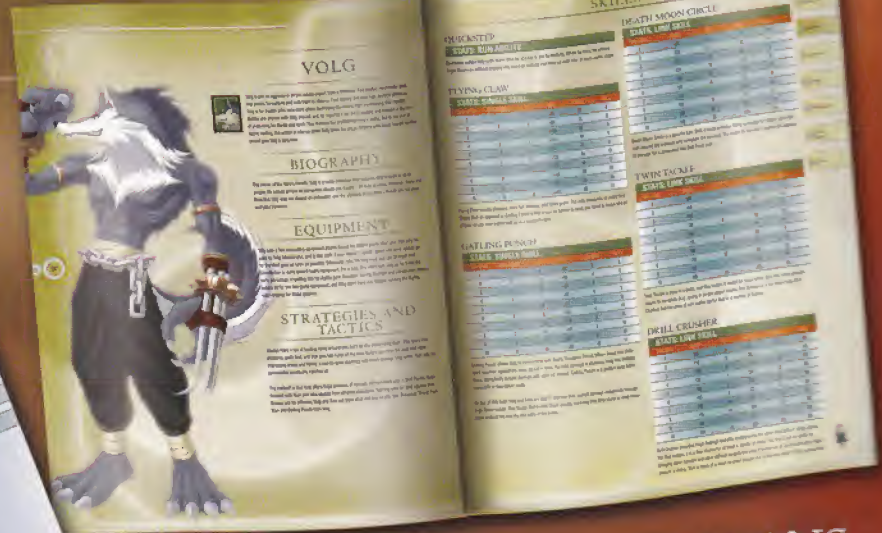
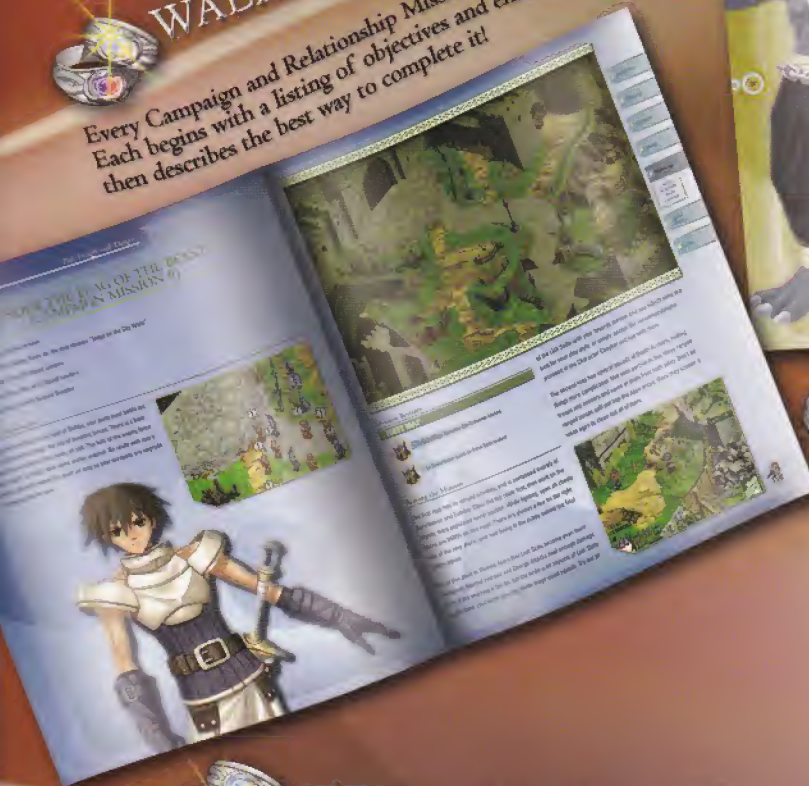


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